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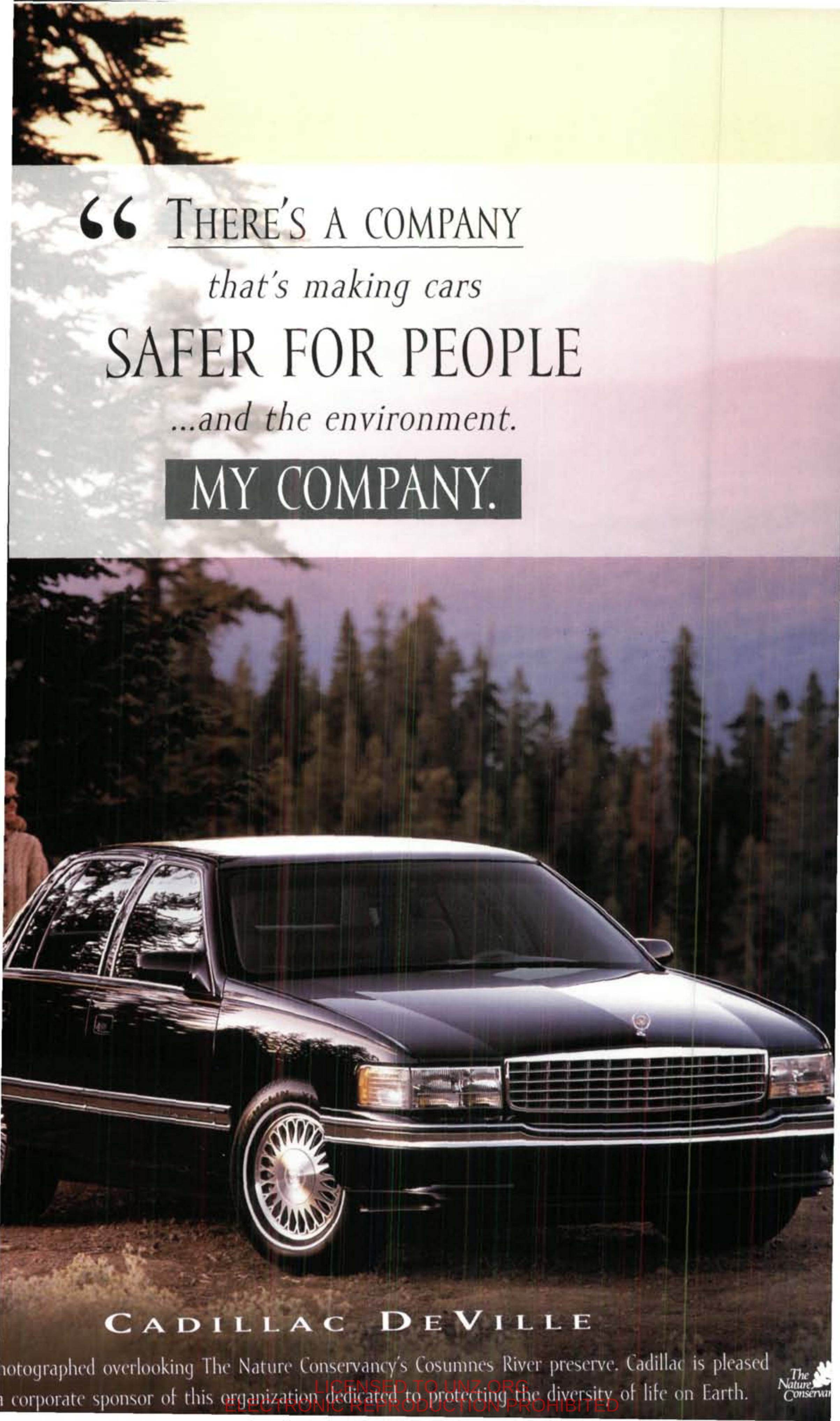
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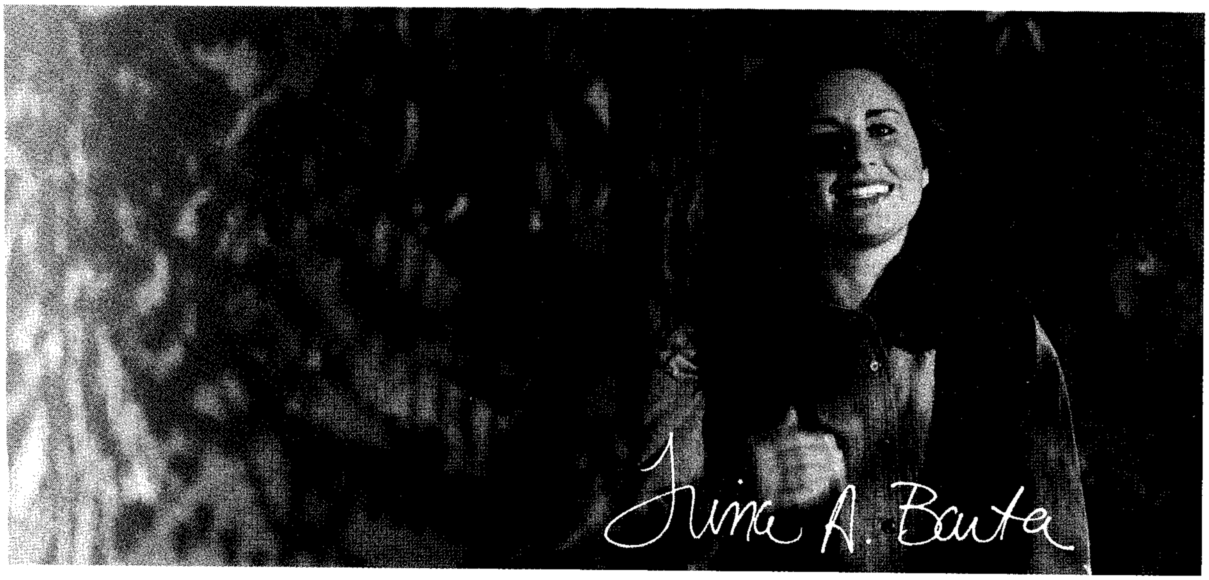

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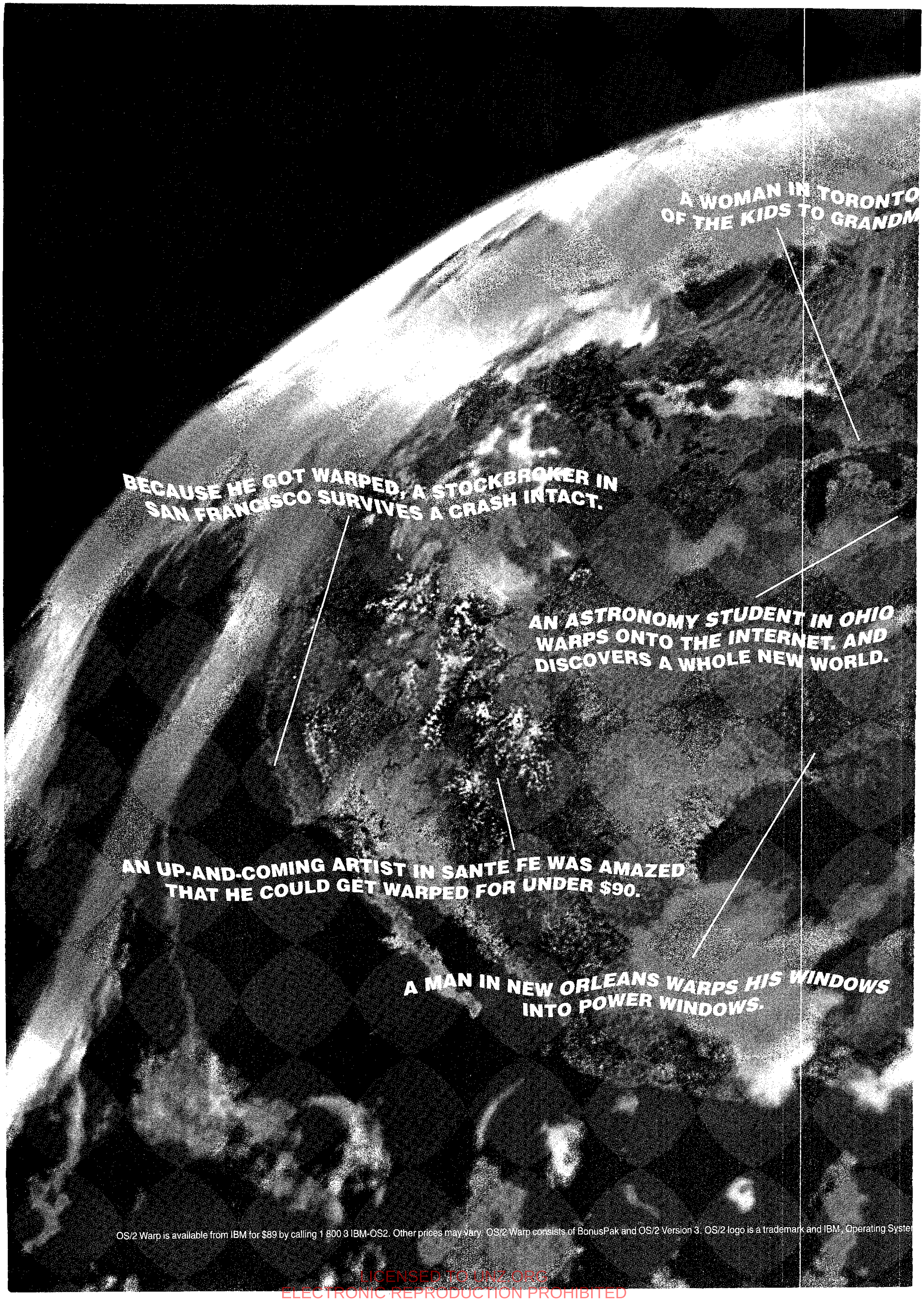
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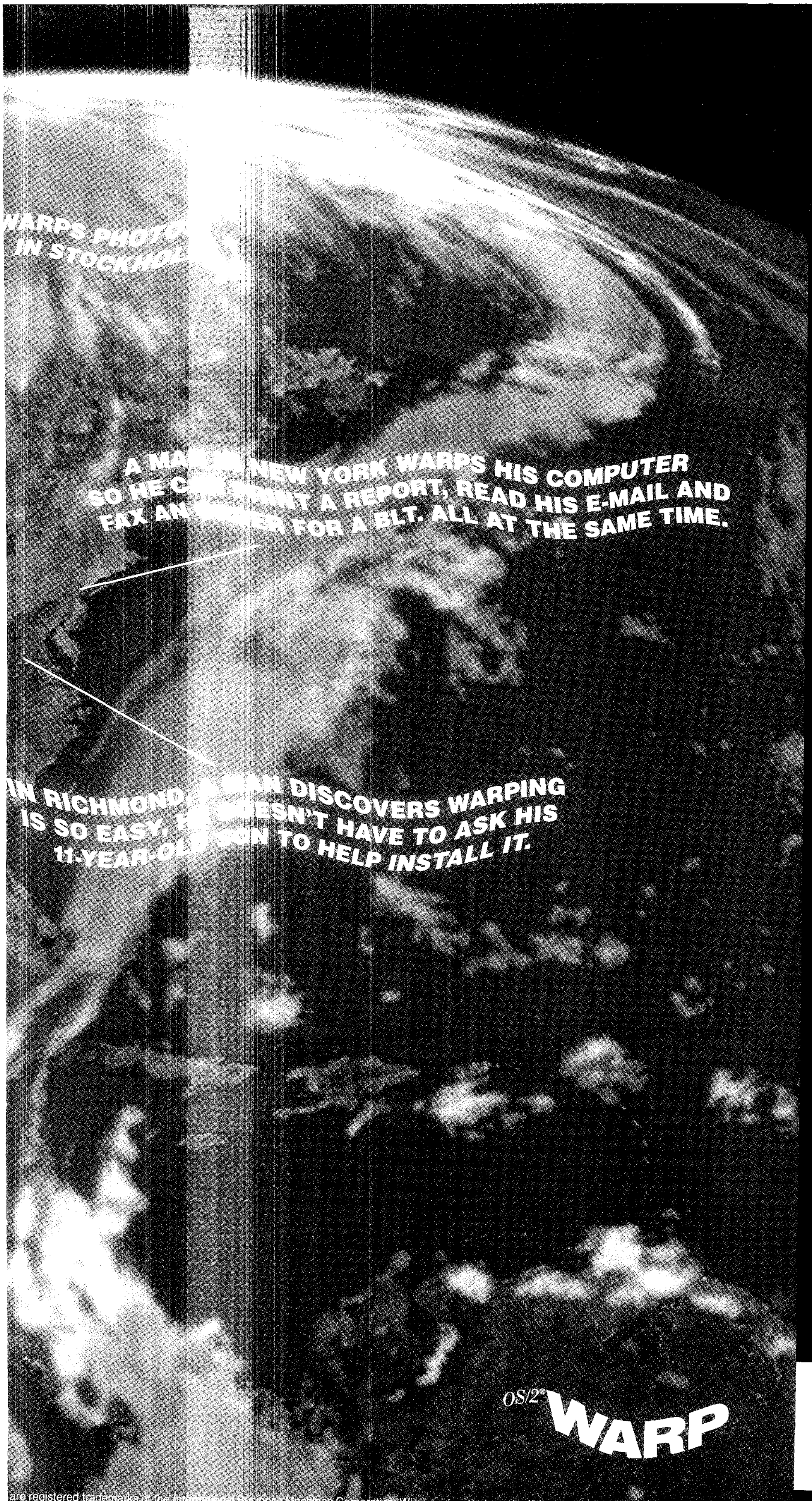
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THE NEW YORKER

NOVEMBER 14, 1994

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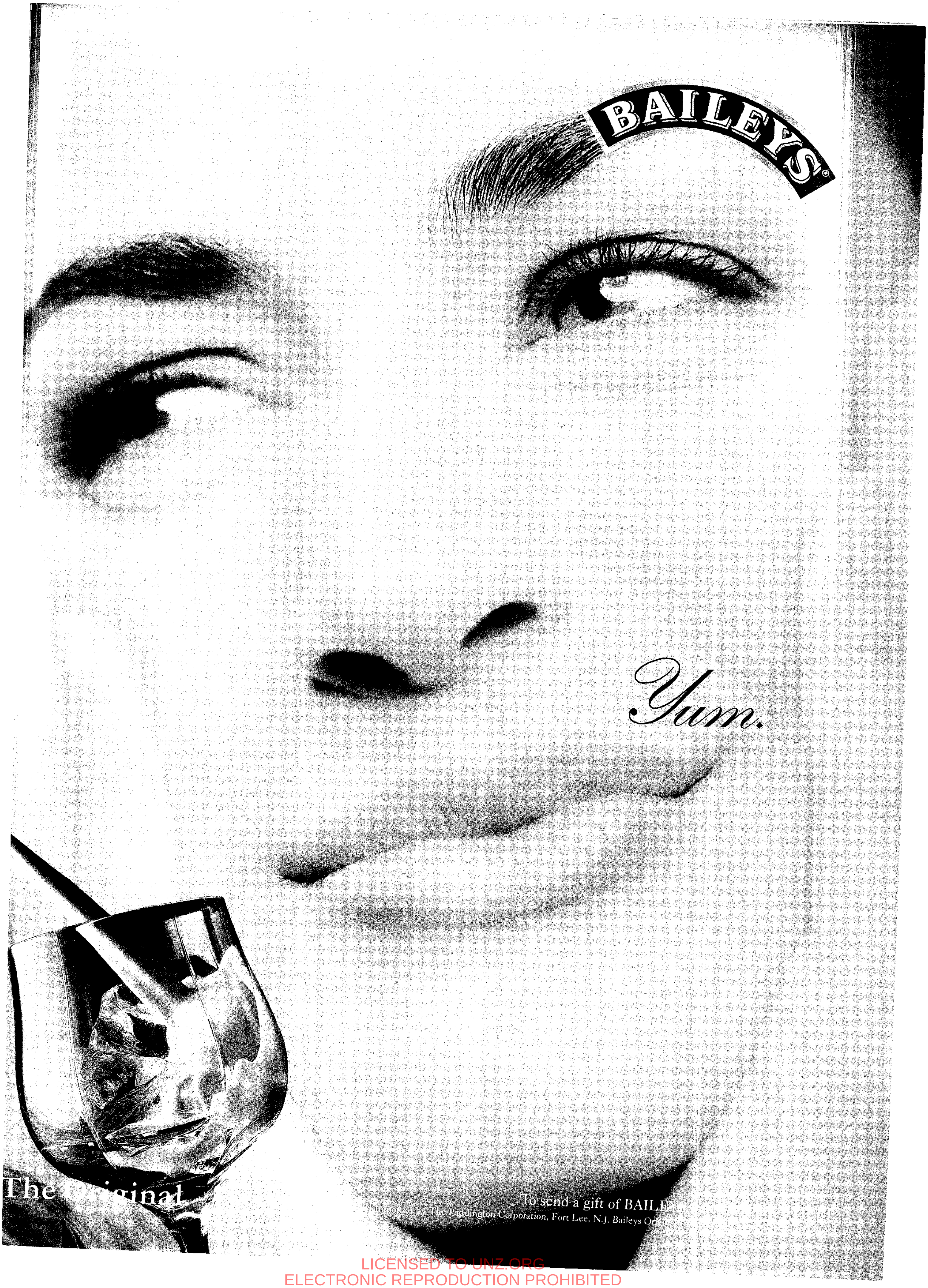
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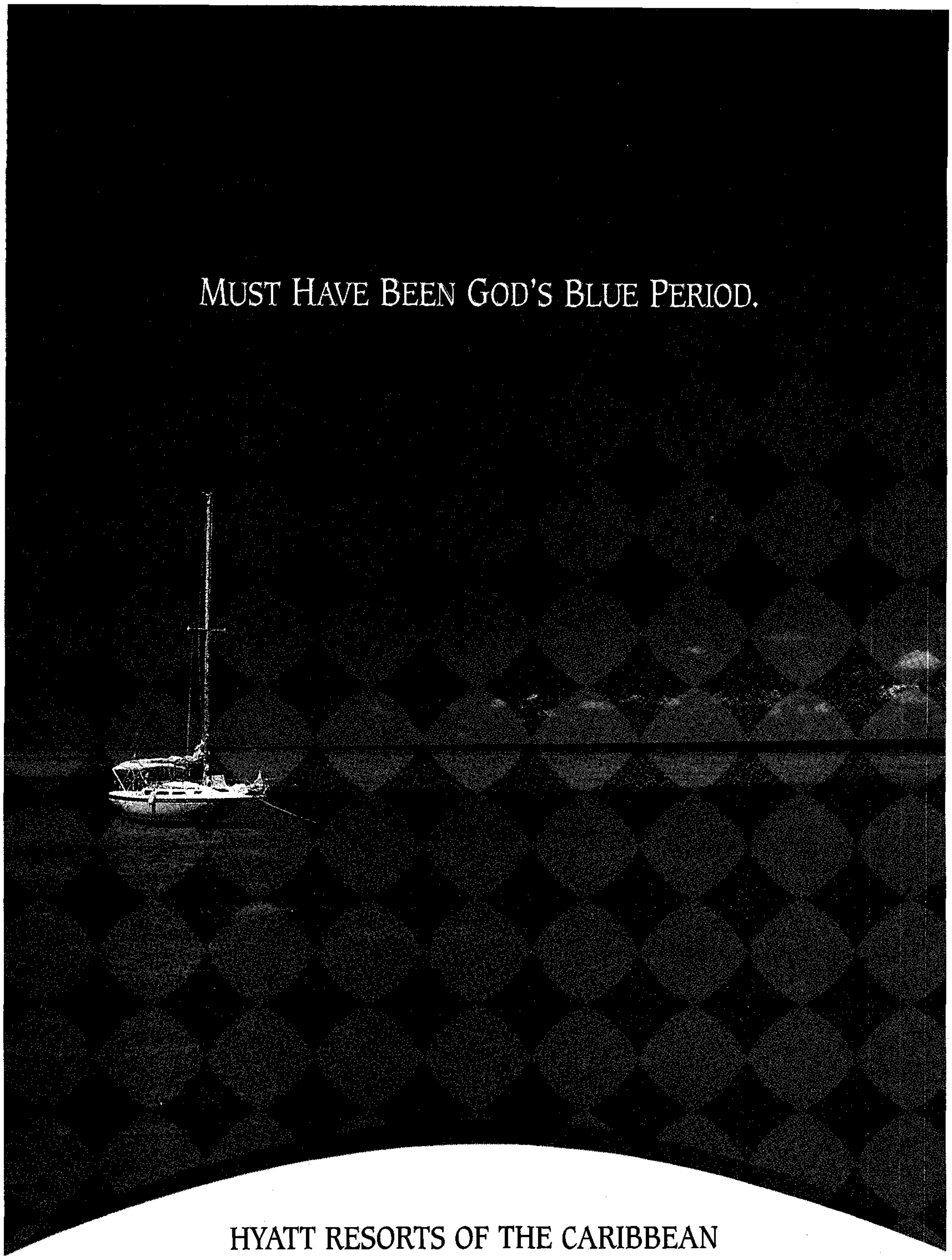

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COMMENT

MIDTERM MELANCHOLY

After Tuesday, Clinton had better let himself be Clinton.

PRESIDENT CLINTON was talking about Haiti when he remarked that the test of a new democracy is not the first election but the second. That test can apply to an American Presidency, too. It was not Franklin D. Roosevelt's first landslide, in 1932, that confirmed the New Deal; it was the election of 1934, which strengthened his position in Congress and proved that he had captured the support of millions of Americans disheartened by economic collapse. Two years into his Presidency, F.D.R. was a long way from ending the Great Depression (only the Second World War would do that), but he had done much to restore confidence in democracy, and had earned, in the words of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "the conviction of plain people that he had given them head and heart and would not cease fighting in their cause."

No historian is likely to write that about the 1994-model Bill Clinton. If Tuesday's elections turn out to be anything like the predicted auto-da-fé of Democrats and incumbents, the chief victim will be the most prominent Democrat and incumbent of them all. Barring a huge surprise, the verdict will probably be that Mr. Clinton has failed to attract the disgruntled voters of 1992, who (like their 1932 counterparts) were deeply nervous about the economy and the American political system, and who (like the voters of the thirties who flirted with Norman Thomas, William Lemke, and Huey Long) may now be looking to Newt Gingrich, Ross Perot, Colin Powell, none of the above, or no one at all.

During Mr. Clinton's first half term, almost every time the public was ready to give up on him he redeemed himself by pulling a budget bill or a crime bill out of his hat, showing even those voters who opposed his programs that, unlike his predecessor, he was capable of pushing vital domestic initiatives through Congress. Along with the improving economy, these facts have sheltered him from the full brunt of the Whitewater–Paula Jones assaults on the public perception of his character. If the Republicans seize working control of Congress on Tuesday, though, Mr. Clinton will be stripped of this means of salvation.

A President with large domestic am-

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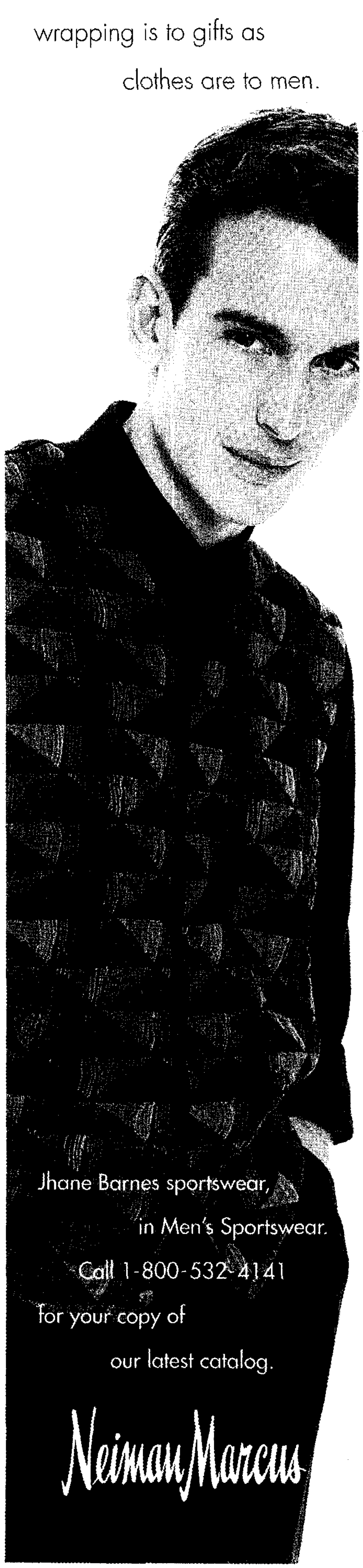

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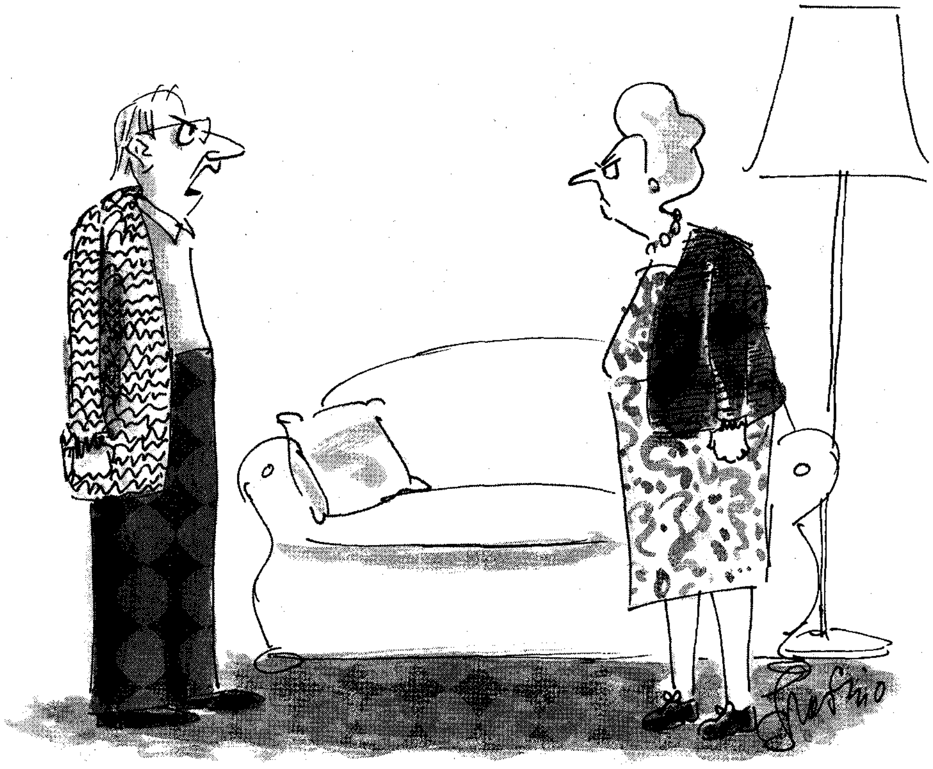

"And, what's more, I never loved you. My father bullied me into marrying you."

• •

bitions who is frustrated by a midterm congressional defeat often does two things. First, he scorns the divisive prime-ministerial task of proposing controversial programs and plays up the ceremony of his chief-of-state role, which unifies the nation and draws him toward the ideological center. For the forty-second President, this process has already begun. White House aides murmur about a New Clinton, repackaged and reprogrammed to be voter-friendly on American political streets that have grown meaner than ever. Already banished are the tousled pompadour of Mr. Clinton's early Presidency, and the West Hollywood neckties adorned with sunflowers and Jazz Age squiggles: Clinton's new razor cut and power ties are indistinguishable from a bond salesman's. His gait is changing from Estes Kefauver's stroll to John Wayne's stride. And there is to be no more popping off on airport tarmacs: now the President will stand at lecterns and deliver well-scripted addresses on family values and other subjects that transcend party lines, perhaps including the middle-class tax cut he floated in 1992 (and wisely abandoned in 1993).

The other thing a frustrated leader often does is seek solace in foreign policy. After the 1970 midterm election, Richard Nixon, reeling from congressional losses and desperately worried about reëlection (Evans and Novak suggested he might well become the first President since Hoover to be denied a second term), sought to insure that by mid-1972 Americans would see his initiatives toward Russia and China as so indispensable that they would see him that way, too. It is hardly an accident that Mr. Clinton, two months after being vanquished on health care, the central mission of his Presidency, is in the midst of a diplomatic blitz that ranges from Haiti to Korea, from Iraq to Northern Ireland. Journalists are already being fed background stories about the President's new delight in foreign policy.

Greater attention to the world will please Americans who have been worried that Mr. Clinton actually believed his own 1992 campaign premise that global affairs scarcely mattered anymore. But, as a cure for what is apt to ail the President after this year's elections, his transforming himself, Zelig-like, into Mr. Diplomacy may prove to be worse than the disease. Immersion in foreign policy came easily to Mr. Nixon, who vastly preferred arms control to postal reform and could afford to tell Theodore H. White—for publication, no less—that he'd "always thought this country could run itself domestically without a President." Mr. Clinton, on the other hand, is fabled for avoiding the subject during his campaign and his first eighteen months with a thoroughness seen in no President in a half century. Forsaking health care for Rwanda will have the likely result of making Clinton feel like some miserable Stepford Wife. No President who goes against his own grain can behave convincingly; witness the self-defeating awkwardness of the fall, 1992, George Bush, nagged by consultants to grow his hair longer, giving speeches in windbreakers, clamming up about what he really loved, and feigning interest in domestic issues. For Mr. Clinton now to don the striped pants of Foreign Policy President will only confirm the suspicions of those who complain that there is no center to the man. And it will do nothing to solidify his one remaining mass of intense support—Democrats who want their political and economic system fixed.

As a devotee of Harry Truman, Clinton should remember how H.S.T. came back after losing both houses of Congress in 1946, when even Democrats were calling for his resignation. It was not by homogenizing himself. Quite the opposite. During his first two years, Mr. Truman eased up on domestic reform and limited most of his public utterances to state papers written for him by others. It was only after his midterm defeat that he became the fighting progressive we now honor. Mr. Truman had the satisfaction of knowing that even if he lost the Presidency in 1948 he would go down fighting for what he really believed in. As it happened, people flocked to him for his genuineness and his guts. Like Mr. Truman, Mr. Clinton may well find himself running against one or two independents—a situation that would make it imperative for him to hold on to his Democratic base. That will be impossible if he spends the next two years doing a poor, melancholy impersonation of George Bush. The only way Bill Clinton is likely to be reëlected is the same way he was elected: as a reformer.

—MICHAEL R. BESCHLOSS

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IN THE MAIL

THE HUFFINGTONS

Sidney Blumenthal's article about Michael and Arianna Huffington ("The Candidate," October 10th) was deliciously vivid and entertaining, but it went astray in labelling Arianna Huffington *any* sort of feminist. To call "The Female Woman," Ms. Huffington's first book, "a revisionist feminist book" is like calling "Mein Kampf" a revisionist version of the Bible. Her book is a rabidly misogynist tract that counsels the manipulation of mere men—the weaker sex—by the gender that knows how callow and needy these mortals are. It says, in effect, that women don't *need* legal or economic equity, because they can marry it. Arianna's life has been devoted to demonstrating this principle, which is the oldest male-chauvinist canard. Historians now say that "Mein Kampf" showed exactly what Hitler would do if he came to power. "The Female Woman" shows exactly what Mr. and Mrs. Huffington will do if they are allowed to buy a seat in the Senate and, after that, a bed in the White House: make the world safe for heirs to oil wells and their consorts but unsafe for everyone else, of any gender.

Erica Jong
New York City

Mr. Blumenthal's article on Michael and Arianna Huffington reminds me of the lawyers' bromide "When the law is on your side, argue the law; when the facts are on your side, argue the facts; when neither is on your side, pound the table." I initiated the "Critical Mass" dinner that the article mentions. It grew out of Washington *Post* op-ed articles by Norman Lear and Charles Krauthammer published in the spring of 1993. Lear argued that Mrs. Clinton's "new politics of meaning" speech was a healthy effort to reinject spirituality into politics, while Krauthammer chastised Lear for advocating a discussion of values without mentioning religion. We thought that the dinner would be a good, healthy debate over whether values should be introduced into the public square *with* religious overtones or *without* them.

It turned into something shockingly different. Mr. Blumenthal, along with the Washington *Post* crew of Bradlee, Cohen, Greenfield, and Quinn, surprised the rest of us by arguing against *any* discussion of morality in politics. Now we have a Senate campaign dedicated to what the vast majority of Americans outside the Washington *Post* editorial board want to see: a meaningful discussion of the central moral principles that ought to guide our civic life.

The Messrs. Blumenthal et al. are scared to death of such a discussion, because it threatens the secular fundamentalism that is at the core of their ideology. Secular fundamentalism is a legitimate ideology. It is wrong, in my view and in the Huffingtons', but it is legitimate. And it is legitimate to debate the merits of our current morally vacant civic discourse against those of a more values-driven approach.

Jeffrey A. Eisenach
President, The Progress and Freedom Foundation
Washington, D.C.

TRUTH IN FICTION

The furthest thing from my mind when I read "The Painted Bird," back in the early seventies, was whether the events it recounts were actually true. The fantastic episodes seemed too wildly monstrous to be true. It does not lessen the value of the work one iota to find out that they were not true. Nor does it make Jerzy Kosinski a liar, and

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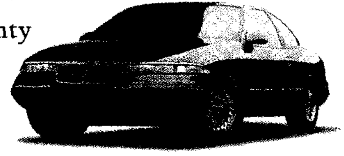

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[*] 1995 Continental available January 1995.

[†] Available on Mark VIII models produced after 10/17/94.

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all novelists falsifiers, fibbers, and perjurers. James Park Sloan ("Kosinski's War," October 10th) seems to have gone to a lot of trouble only to find that Kosinski did not literally live the life of his fictional character. What a revelation! Mark Twain wasn't Huck Finn, either, and J. D. Salinger wasn't Holden Caulfield. "The Painted Bird" sheds light on what it means to be human, as all great fiction does, and stands (or falls) on its own as a work of art.

FRANK J. REGAN
Honeoye, N.Y.

When I first read "The Painted Bird," as a teen-ager, it seemed to me that the story was fiction based on fact; it rang true emotionally yet seemed to have a surreal context. Kosinski the man was like his character Chance, in "Being There," in that he had all sorts of self-serving reasons for projecting his own version of "truth" onto his life and words. As a habitué of sex bars and talk shows, Kosinski lacked the rabbi-like deportment and impeccable moral credentials of his fellow survivor-célèbre Elie Wiesel. Like an exotic "court Jew," he was considered both entertaining and despicable by a public that requires "true" victims to be saints, and survivors to be eternally grateful.

JUDITH JOSEPH
Northbrook, Ill.

Jerzy Kosinski was a close friend of my family for many years, and I was deeply angered by the allegations made in Mr. Sloan's article. Kosinski was a novelist, not an autobiographer, and he was also a supreme raconteur. Why should we listen to all those good Polish witnesses in preference to him? We will never know his complete childhood story, but we do know that he was a representative of millions of children whose story he did tell—unforgettably. We loved him for his warmth, his humor, his humanity, and, above all, his tolerance.

SALLY WHYTE
London, England

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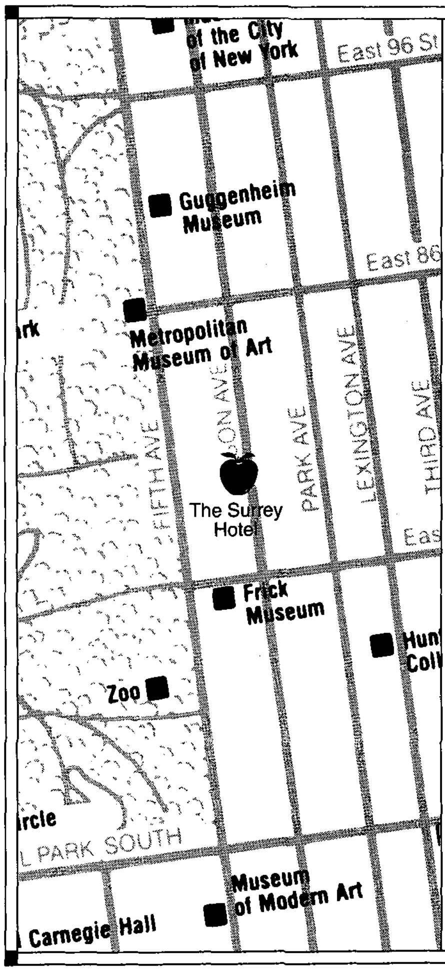

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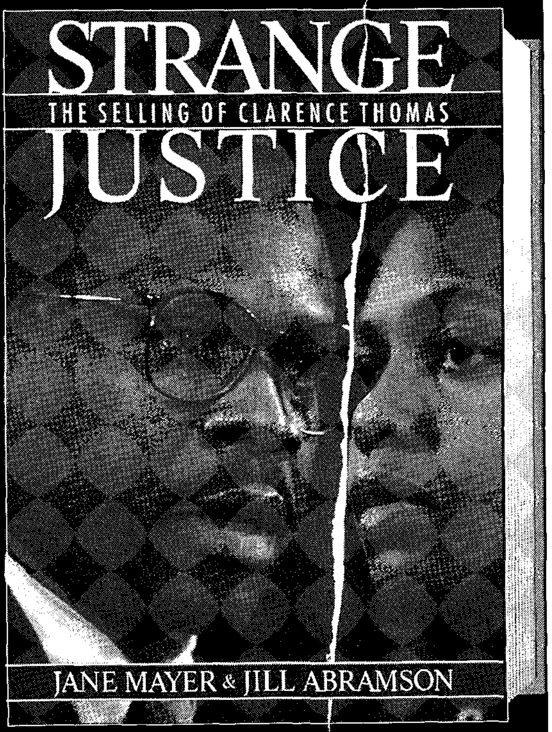

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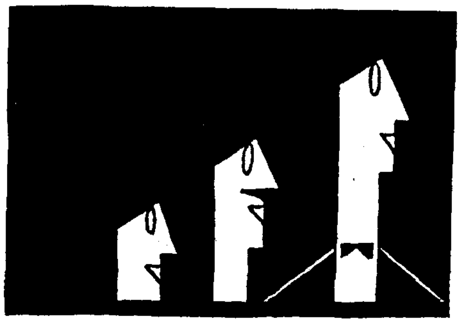

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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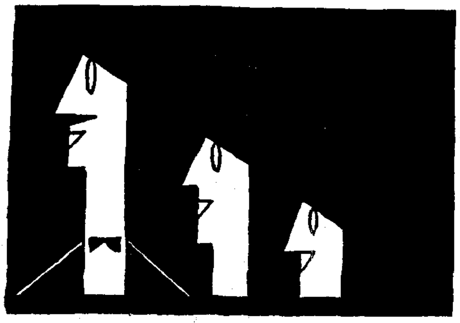


THE THEATRE

Emerald Aisles

EVER since 1989, when his film version of "Henry V" became a hit, it's been convenient to treat Kenneth Branagh's career as a continuation of Laurence Olivier's. But Branagh's red hair, Irish roots, and bantamweight pugnaciousness suggest another comparison: to James Cagney. Branagh has acknowledged the connection before—never more fully than in his 1987 play "Public Enemy," now at the Irish Arts Center. Although it's not much more than a moody knockabout, the piece nonetheless offers an enticing conceit: a Belfast boy works the night-club circuit as a Cagney impersonator until the Troubles turn his gangster fantasies into real-life drama. Nye Heron, the director, has assembled his cast wisely: Paul Ronan makes the young man credibly Cagney-like; Patti Allison, as his mother, is suitably blowsy; and Brian D'Arcy James supplies a million-dollar smile for his role as the young man's wavering friend.

A few blocks north, at Theatre Four, Milo O'Shea and Kitty Sullivan could never be mistaken for the stars of another age. In their Irish Rep show "Alive, Alive Oh!," an omnibus evening of Irish writing, they provide as delightful an assortment of characters as you'll find in New York. Their readings, from such writers as Beckett, Wilde, O'Casey, and, especially, Joyce, remind us how, with a little luck and a lot of practice, talent can ripen with age.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Das Barbecü—A musical comedy, inspired by Wagner's "Ring" cycle and set in Texas. The book and lyrics are by Jim Luigs and the score is by Scott Warrender. Christopher Ashley is the director. Opens Nov. 10 at 6:45. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave. 307-4100.)

Durang Durang—Short plays written by Christopher Durang, including "For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls," a spoof of "The Glass Menagerie." Previews continue through the Nov. 13 matinée; the show opens that evening at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

The Glass Menagerie—Julie Harris stars as Amanda Wingfield in the Roundabout's production of the Tennessee Williams classic. The cast also includes Calista Flockhart, Željko Ivanek, and Kevin Kilner. Directed by Frank Galati. Previews through Nov. 13. Opens Nov. 15 at 7. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Hapgood—Stockard Channing heads up a British intelligence agency in the New York première of this 1988 play by Tom Stoppard. The director is Jack O'Brien. Previews begin Nov. 11. (Mitzi Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Hey Buddy—A play by Bryan Goluboff, with Mark Auerbach as a Jewish kid seeking revenge after being beaten by a gang. Previews through Nov. 12. Opens Nov. 13 at 7. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

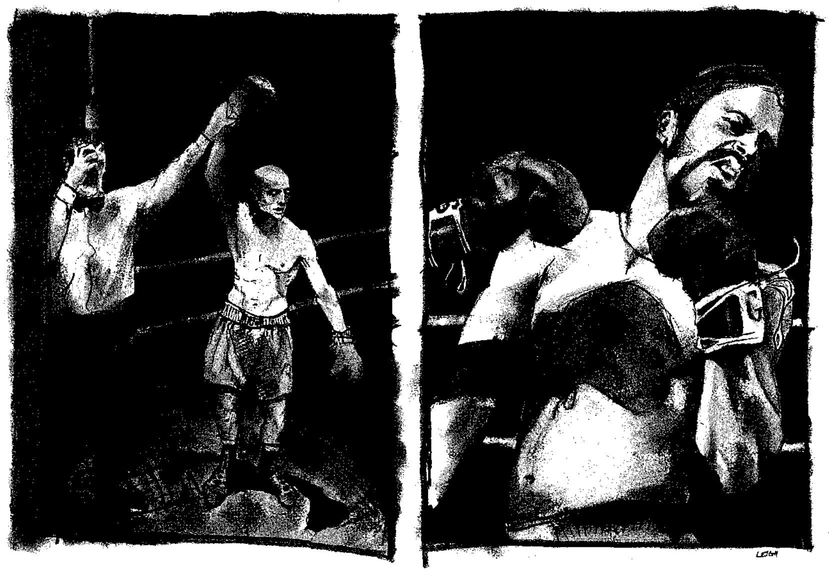
Me and Jezebel—Elizabeth Fuller's two-person show about the month Bette Davis spent with the author and her family. Randy Allen portrays Miss Davis. Opens Nov. 9 at 7. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

The Shadow Box—A revival of Michael Cristofer's 1977 play. With Mary Alice, Frankie R. Faison, Ron Frazier, Sean Nelson, Estelle Parsons, Mercedes Ruehl, Raphael Sbarge, Jamey Sheridan, and Marlo Thomas. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Simpatico—A new play by Sam Shepard about racetrack lowlife, with Beverly D'Angelo, Marcia Gay Harden, Ed Harris, James Gammon, and Welker White. Previews through Nov. 13. Opens Nov. 14 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Sunset Boulevard—Glenn Close stars as Norma Desmond in Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical. Based on the 1950 movie and directed by Trevor Nunn, the show also features George Hearn, Alan Campbell, and Alice Ripley. In previews. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

3 Postcards—Craig Lucas and Craig Carnelia's musical about three Manhattan friends, which has been reworked since its début at Playwrights Horizons, in 1987. The first show of the season for Circle Rep, it is also the company's first production in its new home at Circle in the Square Downtown. In previews. (159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)



James Colby and Kamar de los Reyes, and Nelson Vasquez, in "Blade to the Heat."

CHRISTINA LEIGH

OPENED RECENTLY

Beauty and the Beast—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince. Directed by Robert Jess Roth. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Beaux' Stratagem—A Restoration comedy by George Farquhar, presented by the Pearl Theatre Company. With Joanne Camp, Kurt Ziskie, Anna Minot, Robert Hock, and Arnie Burton. (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Blade to the Heat—A drama by Oliver Mayer about three Latino boxers, portrayed by Paul Calderon, Kamar de los Reyes, and Nelson Vasquez. Set in the fifties, the play was directed by George C. Wolfe and features fight choreography by Michael (the Silk) Olajide, Jr. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Nov. 27.)

Carousel—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

A Cheever Evening—A. R. Gurney's new play, based on eighteen stories by John Cheever, is Cheeveresque in name only, a skin-deep, almost sitcom-like gloss on the writer's piercingly beautiful and intensely disquieting work. The only authentic thing about the

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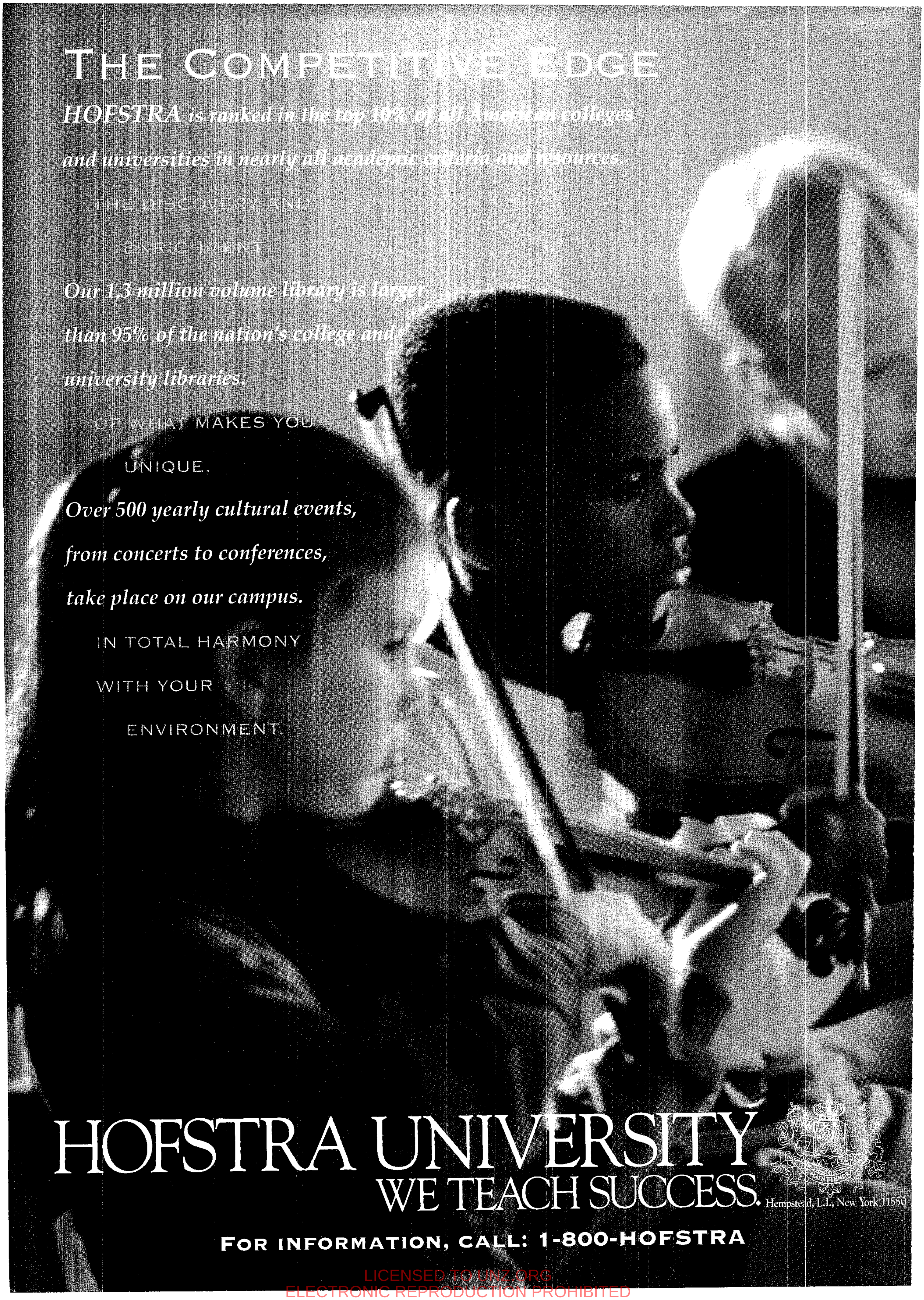

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evening is the talent of the six delicious actors in the cast—John Cunningham, Mary Beth Peil, Jack Gilpin, Julie Hagerty, Robert Stanton, and Jennifer Van Dyck. Directed by Don Scardino. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Country Wife—William Wycherley's Restoration comedy: five acts of marital infidelities and double-entendres. In keeping with the custom of Wycherley's day, director Tori Haring-Smith has dressed her actors in contemporary (not period) style, and they interact with the audience throughout. Historical accuracy, though, is no guarantee of an animated performance. Here the subtle art of making cuckolds is conveyed all too often with a lascivious pelvic thrust. Presented by Jean Cocteau Repertory. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

The Cover of Life—While R. T. Robinson's new play has comic moments, it's serious at heart. Sara Botsford plays a savvy New York reporter sent south to research a cover story for *Life*. The article is supposed to be about three Louisiana women gallantly making sacrifices while the three brothers they're married to are off fighting the Second World War, but nothing turns out to be as rosy as *Life* wants to believe. Peter Masterson directed; the acting is clear, the staging effective, and the drama poignant. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Damn Yankees—The big musical hit of 1955 is back, in its first Broadway revival. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of Mr. Abbott). But the cast, which includes Victor Garber, delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. (4/4/94) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Diva Is Dismissed—Jenifer Lewis has a good voice, good looks, and good comic timing in her one-woman show. Billed as "the queen of camp," she isn't quite as outrageous as the title suggests. Less humility would deliver more glee. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Nov. 13.)

Doctor Faustus—It's the old story, and at times it drags in the telling, but the Independent Theatre Company's production of Christopher Marlowe's late-sixteenth-century play is a well-deserved showcase for the troupe's lead actor and artistic director, Paul Todaro; he is utterly believable both as the overweeningly greedy Faust who takes a childish glee in playing pranks on the Pope and as the horror-stricken Faust who realizes he can't get out of his deal. Intelligently directed by Michelle Gigante. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes Nov. 26.)

A Fair Country—A new play by Jon Robin Baitz, presented by the Naked Angels company. Patrick Breen, Herb Foster, Mary McCormack, Matt McGrath, Ron Rifkin, and Maria Tucci make up the cast. (The Space, 114 W. 17th St. 727-0020. Closes Nov. 19.)

The Gift Horse—The Jewish Repertory Theatre presents a comedy by Michael Hardstark about a man whose Orthodox Jewish father-in-law devises betting schemes based on Scripture. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Grease!—The talented cast and the inventive production team show off the gleeful phonyness of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical with unembarrassed affection, and the result is a fun fake that's not trying to pass as the real thing. Jeff Calhoun directed and choreographed. (5/30/94) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far—An autobiographical musical-comedy revue written by Leslie Jordan and starring Mark Baker. It's a tale of growing up Tennessean, thespian, and gay. Joe Patrick Ward's energetic musical numbers run the gamut from corn to gospel. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

Inside Out—Adryan Russ and Doug Haverty's musical comedy about six women who meet each week for group therapy. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

An Inspector Calls—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham, Philip Bosco, and Jane Adams, has ideas, not actions, to play. Directed by Stephen Daldry. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Irish Repertory Theatre—Presenting two shows in repertory: "Mother of All the Behans," with Rosaleen Linehan, is Peter Sheridan's adaptation of Brian Behan's book, and "Alive, Alive Oh!," with Milo O'Shea and Kitty Sullivan, is an evening of Irish writing. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (4/25/94) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jelly Roll!—Vernel Bagneris stars in a musical show about Jelly Roll Morton. With Morten Gunnar Larsen on piano. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 265-1086.)

Killer Joe—A black comedy, set in a Texas trailer park, about a son who plots to kill his mother for the insurance money. With David Mogentale and Danna Lyons. Written by Tracy Letts. (29th Street Repertory Theatre, 212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

Love! Valour! Compassion!—A new play by Terrence McNally, directed by Joe Mantello. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—Put the Ridiculous Theatrical Company and Shakespeare's comedy together and you get ridiculousness of a very high order indeed. Under the direction of Everett Quinton (who plays Bottom and Pyramus), the large cast, featuring many veteran Ridiculi and a few newcomers, puts on a well-paced and spirited performance. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

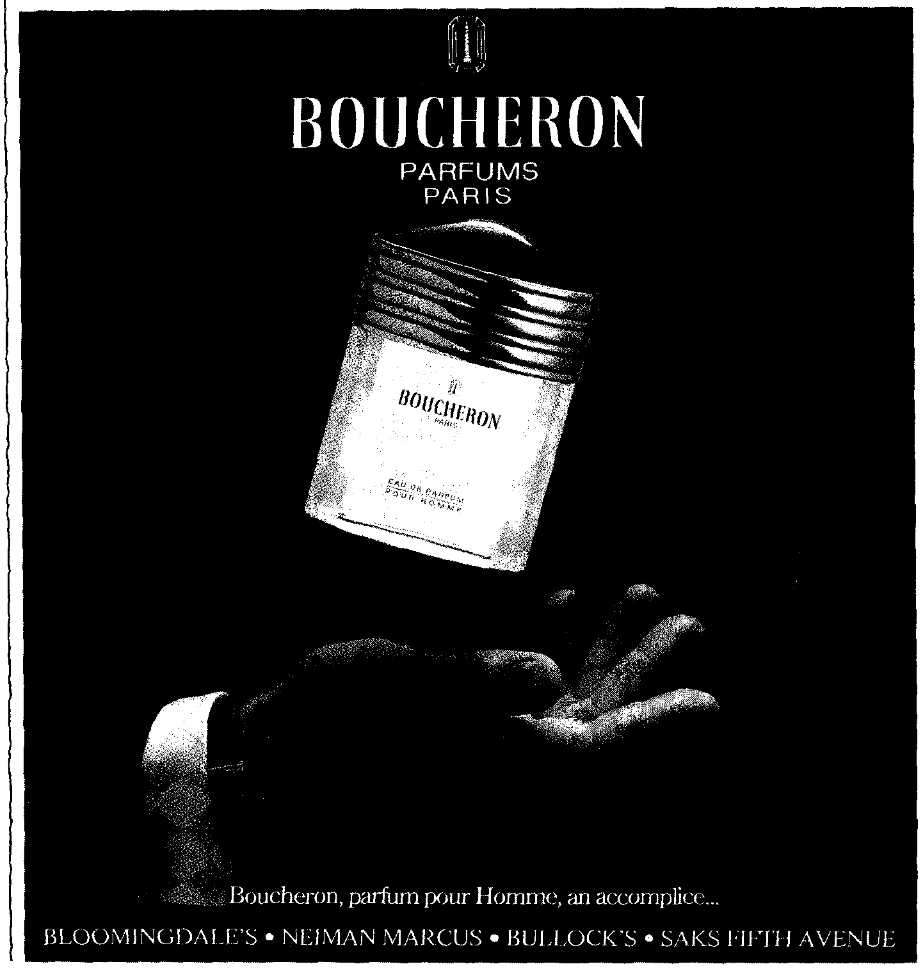
Night Seasons—Jean Stapleton is the matriarch of a wealthy Texas family in this play by Horton Foote, the Signature Theatre Company's playwright-in-residence this season. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200.)

Nunsense 2: The Sequel—The prequel was enough, although audiences seem to love this second coming of writer-director Dan Goggin's hit. Five talented actresses take the veil and perform a revue to raise money for their convent. The audience is asked to participate, and there's dancing, singing, boozing, and bingo, but none of it saves the show from the clutches of cliché. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)

Passion—Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's listless epistolary musical, in which the main characters spend much of their time singing love letters to and from each other. Jere Shea and Marin Mazzie are in fine voice as a dashing soldier and his lover, and Donna Murphy gives a stunning performance as Fosca, the predatory heroine. Lapine, who wrote the libretto, directed. (5/23/94) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Public Enemy—The New York première of a 1987 play by Kenneth Branagh, which is set in Belfast. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

The Scarlet Letter—In Phyllis Nagy's adaptation of the Hawthorne novel, a defiant and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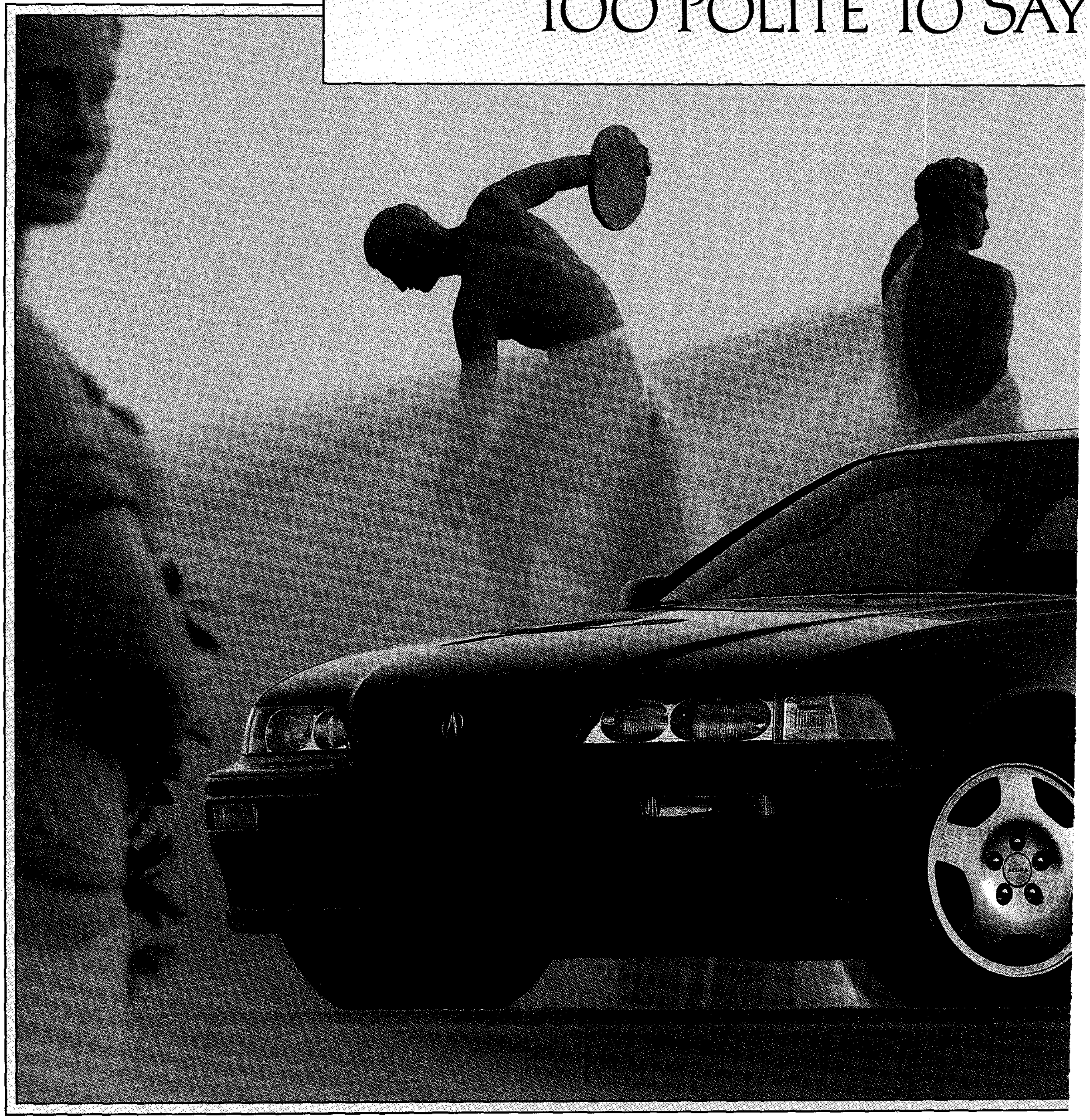

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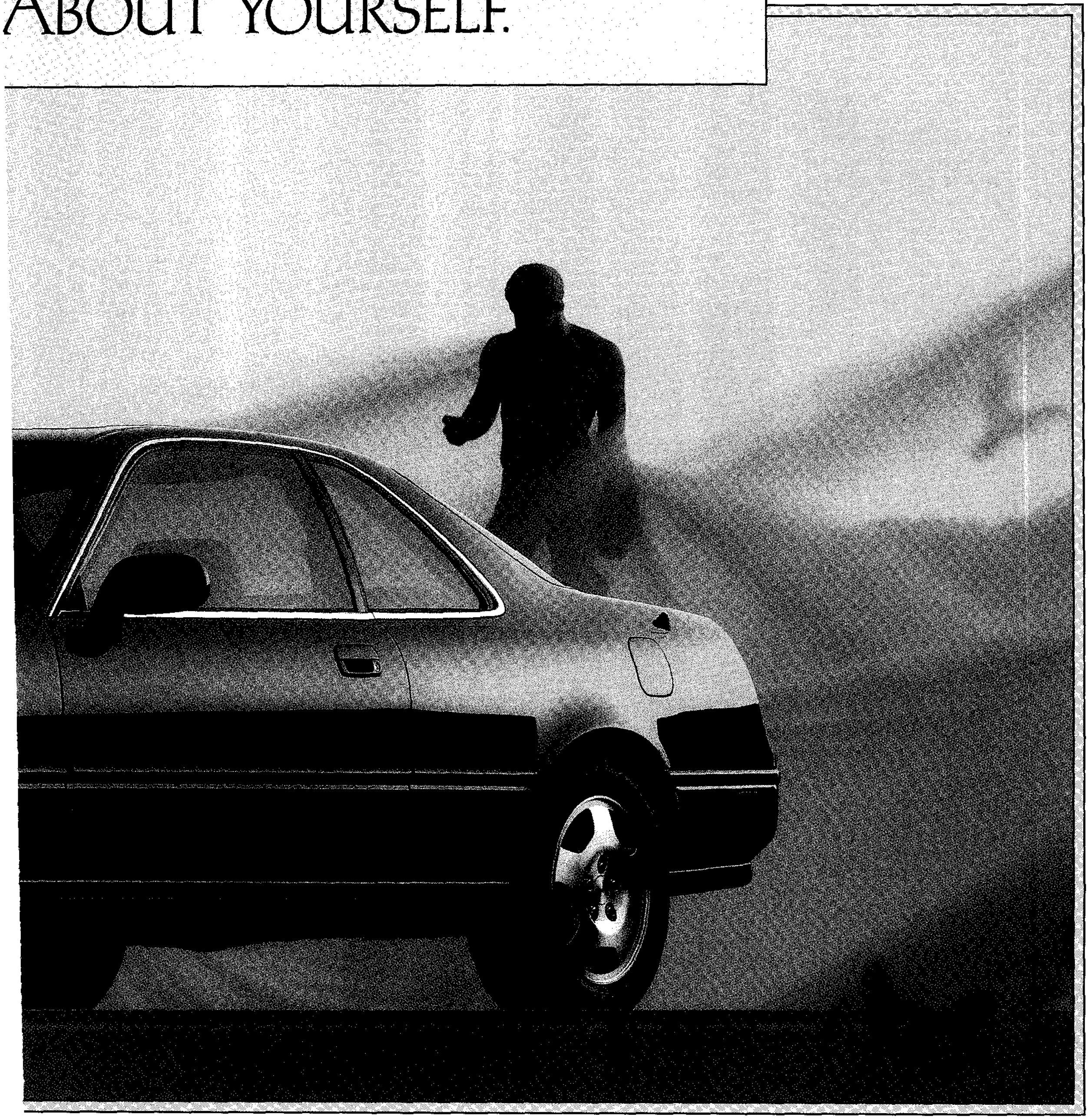

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

contemporary-sounding Hester (Cynthia Nixon) reclaims the town scaffold as a place to display her sensuality rather than her shame. Even wild-child Pearl, played here as a jaded wood elf by the adult actor Erin Cressida Wilson, gets to throw off her humble bonnet. It's all the more unfortunate, then, that having let loose these unrestrained Puritans director Lisa Peterson doesn't allow them to venture deeper into those dark New England woods. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Nov. 13.)

Show Boat—Harold Prince's bighearted production of the 1927 Jerome Kern–Oscar Hammerstein II musical is epic-size, full of life and full of vision. (The set features an amazingly real-looking show boat, designed by Eugene Lee.) And then there's that score, which sweeps through four decades of popular music, from operetta to ragtime to vaudeville—and includes the great existentialist anthem "Ol' Man River," here sung by Michel Bell. With John McMartin and Elaine Stritch as the patriarch and the matriarch of the floating theatre, and Lonette McKee, whose moving rendition of "Bill" is the show's most intimate moment. Also with Rebecca Luker, Mark Jacoby, Gretha Boston, Dorothy Stanley, and Joel Blum. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Some People—Danny Hoch's one-man show features thirteen New York characters. Jo Bonney directed. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Nov. 13.)

That's Life!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. Thirteen composers and lyricists collaborated on the twenty musical numbers. The choreography and direction are by Helen Butleroff. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. Jordan Baker and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes are also in the cast. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Uncommon Women and Others—Second Stage's revival of Wendy Wasserstein's 1977 play, directed by Carole Rothman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

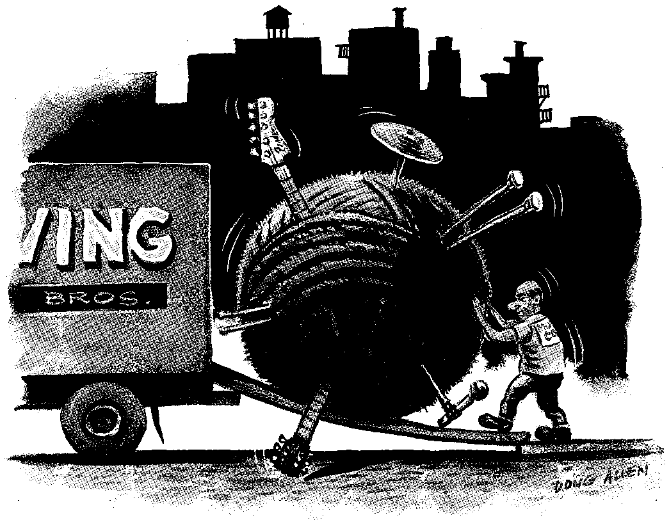
Why We Have a Body—Claire Chafee's romantic comedy about four women, presented by the Women's Project. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 27.)

Yellow Fever—The Pan Asian Repertory Theatre revives this detective comedy by R. A. Shiomi, which was a big hit for the company in 1983. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes Nov. 19.)

You Should Be So Lucky—Charles Busch has the lead in this comedy, which he also wrote. He's joined in the cast by Nell Campbell, Julie Halston, and Stephen Pearlman. Kenneth Elliott is the director. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-7471. Closes Nov. 20.)

LONG RUNS

ALL IN THE TIMING: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **ANGELS IN AMERICA:** "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **FAMILY SECRETS:** Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.



The Knitting Factory moves to new digs.

DANCE

Susan Marshall & Company—The choreographer and her eight-member company come to BAM's Majestic Theatre for the first time, with two New York premières, "Spectators at an Event" and "Fields of View." Marshall is responding to the challenge of a larger venue by experimenting with multimedia. "Fields of View," with a score by Philip Glass, features a production design by Judith Shea that incorporates continuously falling snow. "Spectators at an Event," inspired by the work of the photographer Arthur Fellig (a.k.a. Weegee), is danced in front of projections of his pictures and video images of the dance. The score is a string quartet by Henryk Górecki. (651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. Nov. 9 at 7, Nov. 11-12 at 8, and Nov. 13 at 3.)

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company—Final performances of the engagement. Nov. 9 and Nov. 11 at 8: "A Brahms Symphony," "Fandango," and "Marimba." . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 8: "North Star," "Beau Danube," "Fandango," and "A Brahms Symphony." . . . ¶ Nov. 12-13 at 2: "Concerto Six Twenty-Two," "So in Love," and "Marimba." . . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 8 and Nov. 13 at 7:30: "Concerto Six Twenty-Two," "So in Love," and "Marimba." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Garth Fagan Dance—The opening performance of a two-week engagement includes "Moth Dreams," "Postcards: Pressures & Possibilities" (première), and excerpts from "Griot New York." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 15 at 8. Through Nov. 27.)

NIGHT LIFE

New Threads

After seven years in a funky, ill-lit Houston Street space no larger than a clubhouse shack, the Knitting Factory is finally moving up in the world. This week, the downtown institution best known as a laboratory for the musical experiments of John Zorn, Arto Lindsay, and all manner of spoken-word and avant-garde activities will reëmerge as a dazzling three-story palace at 74 Leonard Street, in Tribeca. The other day, we stopped by for a pre-opening tour with founder Michael Dorf, an émigré from Milwaukee who does hip-night-club-owner patter like a seasoned pro, and he promised that the new Knitting Factory will be an audiophile's dream come true. The main room will hold more than three hundred people, and below the main stage there's another performance space, called the AlterKnit Theatre, with room for an audience of about seventy-five. (The old club could squeeze in only a hundred and eighty.)

Dorf was bragging like a proud father: "We have a *third* stage for bizarre late-night things. We have eighteen lines of microbrewery beer. We have a site on the Internet. We're putting in broadcast equipment. There's no reason why someone couldn't watch a live show on their computer—of course, I can't sell beer that way."

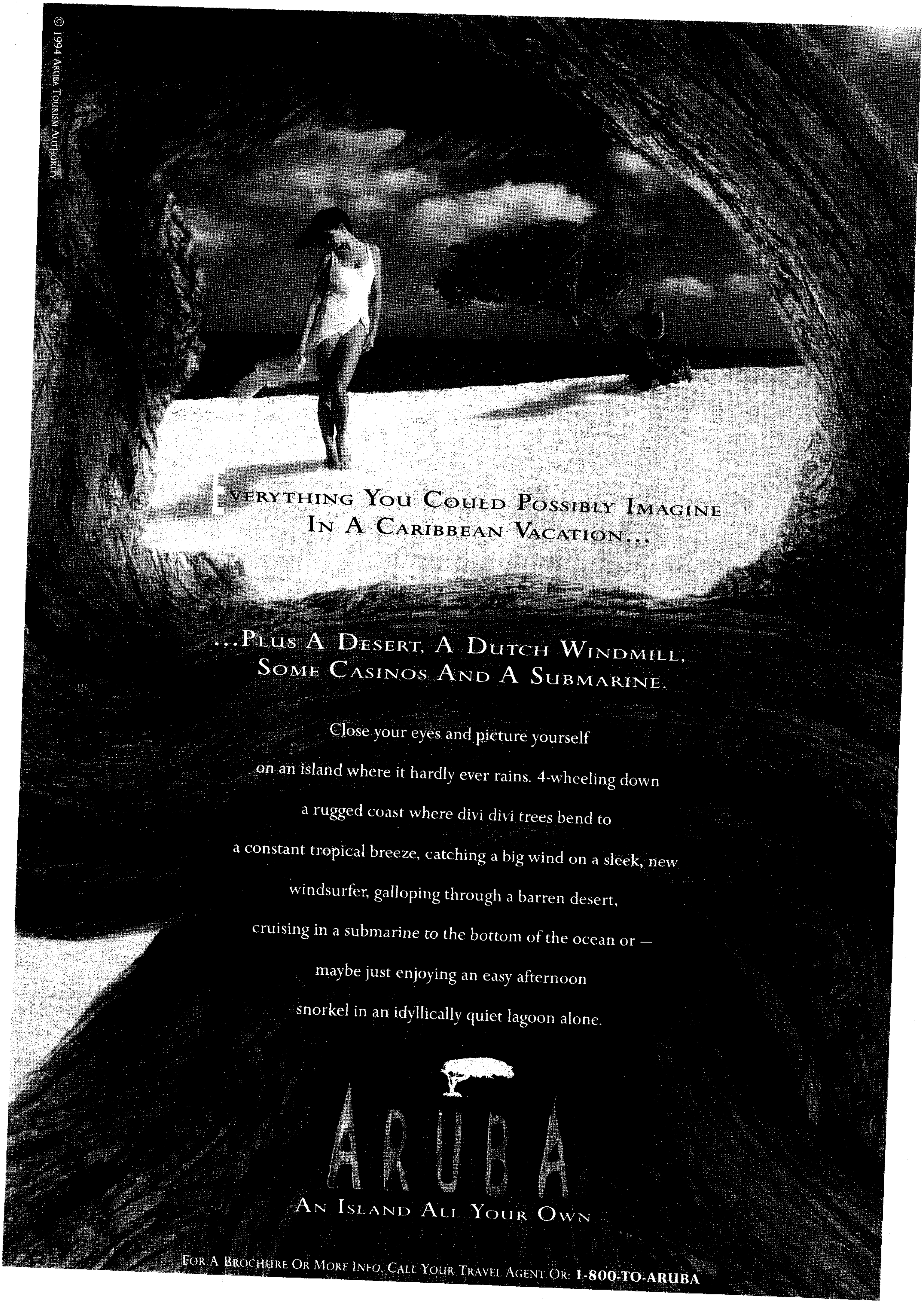
We asked if he felt nervous about the expansion, and he shook his head. "Everyone wants to help," he said. "I've got special guests playing the first week of December who could fill a ten-thousand-seat venue." Dorf wouldn't name any names, for contractual reasons, but attendance is strongly advised. Monday, November 14, will be open house. After that, upcoming bigwigs include Henry Threadgill (November 16), the Jazz Passengers, with Deborah Harry (November 19), the Art Ensemble of Chicago (November 23-24), and American Music Club (December 13-14).

CONCERTS

Steve Perry—Given all the revisionist praise and respect that's been lavished on seventies schmalzmeisters like the Carpenters, it's perfectly logical to predict that in about ten years' time Journey—the band that Steve Perry led into schlock-rock heaven in the early eighties—will be rehabilitated as a great guilty pleasure. In the meantime, Perry and his saccharine tenor are back on the charts with a new album (his second solo effort, actually), "For the Love of Strange Medicine." With Sass Jordan. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Nov. 9-10 at 8.)

Huey Lewis & the News—It's hip to be square, Lewis and the News asserted back in the eighties, when it was and they were. Now it isn't and they aren't. For what it's worth, this clean-cut, regular-dude singer and his sturdy band recently released "Four Chords & Several Years Ago," a collection of cover

DOUG ALLEN



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songs that pay homage to the fifties and pre-psychedelic sixties. (Beacon Theatre. Nov. 11 at 8.)

Dick Hyman and Derek Smith—Two florid pianists with the history of American popular song (pre-rock and roll, that is) at their fingertips will interpret tunes that originated in Second World War-era New York, performing both alone and together. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 11 at 8.)

Whirling Dervishes of Turkey—Presented by the World Music Institute, this group of twelve dancers and twelve musicians and singers will perform the *sema*, an ancient Sufi ceremony. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Nov. 11 at 8.)

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RECORD STORE ARRIVALS

A highly selective list of new releases we're curious to hear.

MADONNA, "Bedtime Stories" (Maverick).
JONI MITCHELL, "Turbulent Indigo" (Reprise).
NIRVANA, "Unplugged" (Geffen/DGC).
THE CULT, "The Cult" (Sire).
LISA GERMANO, "Geek the Girl" (4AD).
TOM PETTY, "Wildflowers" (Warner Bros.).
TOM JONES, "Something for Your Head" (Interscope).
VICTORIA WILLIAMS, "Loose" (Mammoth/Atlantic).
JIMMY PAGE AND ROBERT PLANT, "No Quarter" (Atlantic).
BLACK 47, "Home of the Brave" (SBK).
DIGABLE PLANETS, "Blowout Comb" (Pendulum).
THE CRAMPS, "Flamejob" (Medicine/Giant).
THE LONDON SUEDE, "dog man star" (Columbia).
WALTER BECKER, "Twelve Tracks of Whack" (Giant).
ECHOBELLY, "Everybody's Got One" (Epic).
THE BLACK CROWES, "Amorica" (American).
BLONDIE, "The Platinum Collection" (EMI).

Take 6—This Nashville-based R. & B. outfit is a miniature gospel choir at heart, and you'd be hard pressed to name an ensemble that expresses its inspiration more sweetly. On their current album, "Join the Band," the sextet veers effortlessly from mellow ballads to New Jack swing; featured guests Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, and Queen Latifah would no doubt vouch for Take 6's authority at both ends of the contemporary soul spectrum. (Beacon Theatre. Nov. 12 at 8.)

Ted Rosenthal—This able pianist salutes his own with a program focussing on underappreciated pianist-composers, including Lennie Tristano and Herbie Nichols. Ray Drummond assists on bass, Marvin (Smitty) Smith on drums. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Nov. 13 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Lyle Lovett and His Large Band—Lovett, a wry, dapper Texan with a ten-gallon haircut, is more renowned these days as a member of Robert Altman's troupe and as Mr. Julia Roberts than as the wonderfully strange singer-songwriter he has been for the past decade. His new album, "I Love Everybody"—another impeccable collection of delicate, heartfelt, and insanely ironic songs—is, once again, a lovely mélange of folk, blues, and R. & B. His live shows are fun; they're also surprisingly emotional. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 13-14 at 8.)

Sekou Sundiata and Craig Harris—St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Nov. 12 at 8.

James Jabbo Ware and the Me, We and Them Orchestra—Performing works by Mr. Ware, written in tribute to Ellington, Basie, and Gillespie. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W.

64th St. Nov. 12 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Basia—In the opening performances of an eleven-night engagement. (Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. Nov. 14-15 at 8. Through Nov. 27.)

Gordon Lightfoot—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 15 at 8.

CLUBS

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—**SURGERY** operates on Nov. 12.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Nov. 11-12: Get the blues with **THE KINSEY REPORT.**

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Nov. 11-12: **HASSAN HAKMOUN AND ZAHAR** arrive. Hakmoun and his band Zahar hail from Morocco, but they've been living in New York for the past seven years. The experience has enriched their music in unusual ways. Zahar makes a huge churning sound, incorporating North African rhythms, Western melodies, raga, and Hakmoun's soaring, otherworldly voice. Every Monday in November, members of the **SCREAMING HEADLESS TORSOS** curate a free evening of noise and art. Wednesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—On Nov. 10, catch one of the most improbable pairings in recent pop history: **DIAMANDA GALAS** and **JOHN PAUL JONES.** For those who don't belong to the cult of Galas, her bilingual ululation suggests a woman alternately possessed by the spirits of Tina Turner, Yoko Ono, and a Greek S & M dominatrix. Recently, Galas teamed up with Jones, the former Led Zeppelin bassist, to record "The Sporting Life," a jazz-and-blues-flavored album that's abrasively fascinating, if you can get through it. The **SAMPLES** appear on Nov. 12.

Kaptain Banana, 101 Greene St. (343-9000)—French cabaret *en travesti* in SoHo. Ten dancers re-create the Court of Versailles, a carnival in Rio, Marlene Dietrich, and the Andrews Sisters. There's also a singing gorilla. An entirely over-the-top experience. Dining.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Don't miss **SAM PHILLIPS** on Nov. 9. Not to be confused with the man who discovered Elvis, this former Christian-music artist is simply one of the most distinctive singer-songwriters to have emerged in the past decade. Her warm, dusky voice and hauntingly beautiful songs—which now address spiritual matters in more skeptical, three-dimensional terms—will delight you. The richly idiosyncratic arrangements she crafts with her husband, the producer T-Bone Burnett (Elvis Costello, Counting Crows), are the icing on the cake. On Nov. 10: Living Colour guitarist **VERNON REID** appears with **MASQUE. LOTION** lays it down on Nov. 11.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—**SUGAR** stops by on Nov. 12. Ex-Hüsker Dü front man Bob Mould's current outfit has continued to reap heady praise with its latest release, "File Under Easy Listening," but, really, Sugar is more compelling for its sheer sonic audacity than for its rock craftsmanship. Mould is a dangerously inventive guitarist and a fine front man, but he's certainly no Paul Westerberg.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—The great **MAVIS STAPLES** makes a joyful noise on Nov. 9, with the **PERSUASIONS.** Nov. 10: The **PROCLAIMERS,** a Scottish band fuelled by the supercharged vocals of twin brothers Craig and Charlie Reid. These two skinny, straight-laced nerds seem to become possessed during a performance, and by the time the encore rolls around the audience is usually half-crazy with pleasure, too. Nov. 11-12: The **FUNKY METERS.**

USA, 218 W. 47th St. (869-6103)—The Macy's of dance clubs: overwhelmingly vast and a snap to get lost in. Speaking of dancing, don't miss **THE WATERLILLIES,** who play a brief set here on Nov. 13. Their new album, "Tempted," happily evokes both the glory days of the electronic eighties and the recent work of other dance-floor mavens, like Saint Etienne and Opus III, but without their nostalgia. The songs on "Tempted" range from the propulsive title track to an eerie a-cappella cover of the Carpenters' "Close to You."

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**WESLIA WHITFIELD** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Guitar wizard **STANLEY JORDAN** is here through Nov. 13. Starting Nov. 15: **CELIA CRUZ** and **TITO PUENTE & HIS ORCHESTRA.** Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—On Nov. 11-12: **SONNY ROLLINS.** Rollins may not have a young turk egging him on for this gig, as he does at his Carnegie Hall extravaganzas, but the saxophone colossus rarely needs anyone to help him get his motor started. His engulfing tone alone is an inspiration, and his melodies dance to irrepressible inner rhythms.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through Nov. 12: the **GARY BARTZ** trio, with **LARRY WILLIS.** Judging from Bartz's recent superlative sax work and Willis's fine piano playing, jazz maturity may not hit some musicians until their fifties. These two contemporary masters can dazzle with their enormous musical knowledge. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Time has not diminished the tasteful virtuosity of **BOBBY SHORT'S** ivory-tickling; nor has it taken the edge off his gregarious wit as a singer and showman. Now in his twenty-seventh year at the Café Carlyle, Short can still spin an Ira Gershwin lyric with all the sophistication, humor, and pathos it deserves. Also well served are gems by Duke Ellington, Dorothy Fields, Irving Berlin, and, of course, Cole Porter. A delightful, de-lovely evening. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano. Carroll's timing is infallible, and she is equally at ease with legato figures and double-time sprints. Her vast repertoire has been known to include, among other numbers, a funny "Sweet Georgia Brown" and a lilting, secret "Here's That Rainy Day."

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—**MOSE ALLISON,** who plays here with a trio through Nov. 13, is still making the world safe for pissed-off musical anomalies over sixty. Slamming the piano like Jimmy Yancey possessed by Monk and Bartók, Allison is nothing less than a national treasure. Beginning Oct. 15: **ALLAN HARRIS.** On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The **ED JACKSON** octet and the **TOM VARNER** quintet share the bill on Nov. 9. Jackson was one of the more persuasive alto players in the 29th St. Saxophone quartet; Varner has helped push the French horn out of no man's land. Both of these downtown scenesters are trenchant composers and bandleaders. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** continues to pack them in every Thursday. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—The **ERIC PEARSON** quartet plays on Nov. 9. On Nov. 10-12, catch the **JOHN HICKS** quintet. At times, Hicks is as prodigiously powerful a pianist as McCoy Tyner; at other times, he seems heavy on technique, light on substance. The **WINARD HARPER** quartet starts an engagement on Nov. 15.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—**JUDY CARMICHAEL** and **CHRIS FLORY** are here through Nov. 12. Carmichael knows her way around the knuckle-busting reper-

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toire of Fats Waller, James P. Johnston, and other Harlem piano wizards of the twenties and thirties; guitarist Flory, a longtime veteran of Scott Hamilton's neo-swing band, is a perfect foil.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This week, the Knit closes down its old space with a bang. **ANTHONY BRAXTON** performs on Nov. 9-13. Now in his fourth decade of subverting every preconceived notion of jazz, the always provocative Braxton turns to the piano (rather than his accustomed reed instruments) to present his "Bebop Project." The saxophone spot will be held by Marty Ehrlich, another brilliant, uncategorizable multi-reed man. With no shortage of neo-conservatives playing bop by the book, it's time somebody turned the stuff on its head. (**NOTE:** On Nov. 14, the Knitting Factory will move to 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St.)

Metropolis, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—Nov. 9-12: **BILLY STRITCH.** This tuneful Texan captured attention in the early eighties as the bottom third of the vocal trio Montgomery, Plant, and Stritch. The group broke up in 1990, but Stritch persevered as a singing pianist and an arranger (most spectacularly for Liza Minnelli). In this show, he'll range through jazz, cabaret, country, and comic numbers, backed up by a trio. Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA,** a seventeen-piece swing band.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—**AMANDA MC BROOM** holds forth through Nov. 12. On Nov. 9, she'll be recording a live album—to be titled, appropriately enough, "Live From Rainbow & Stars." **LORNA LUFT** begins a monthlong run on Nov. 15. Closed Mondays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Nov. 13: **KIP HANRAHAN** holds forth, with special guest appearances by **JACK BRUCE, DON PULLEN,** and **CHARLES NEVILLE.** The great **BETTY CARTER** begins a three-night stand on Nov. 15. For this jazz diva, tempo is king. Nobody can shape a rhythm quite like Carter can; time contracts and expands like a Slinky, while phrases unexpectedly fall with an utterly personal logic. Half the pleasure of a Carter show, of course, is checking out her band; alumni of the singer's group include the pianists John Hicks, Cyrus Chestnut, and Stephen Scott. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Nov. 15 (except Nov. 14): the **MAL WALDRON** quintet. Pianist Waldron, a man who can turn three notes into a symphony, leads a very swinging band, with duelling tenorists Chico Freeman and Ricky Ford, and the hand-in-glove rhythm section of bassist Reggie Workman and drummer Pete (La Roca) Sims. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—Through Nov. 12: vocalist **KENNY COLEMAN,** a fine crooner in the Sinatra mold. The **TOMMY FLANAGAN** trio starts on Nov. 15.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **BENNY GREEN** trio appears through Nov. 13. Green has a serious case of the funkies. Unfortunately, this pianist's obvious love for the earthy gospel-blues sound of Horace Silver, Hampton Hawes, and Phineas Newborn often exceeds his own talent for playing it. When he leaves the mannerisms aside, though, Green can be a most persuasive modern stylist, crisp and intelligent. Nov. 15: The **GERI ALLEN** trio. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—The **ABRAHAM BURTON** quartet performs on Nov. 10-12. There may be other trials in Burton's professional life, but, having put in time with drummer Art Taylor's bop academy, the saxophonist has already weathered his toughest challenge. Burton's a robust stylist who combines Jackie McLean's verve with Pete Brown's bluesy rigor.

Elaine de Kooning at Washburn.

HANS NAMUTH

ART

Beyond Victimology

THE fierce feminist artist Sue Williams made her reputation a few years ago with rude, roughly painted, crudely illustrational paintings of domestic violence and sexual abuse. What made her text-strewed images particularly shocking was the disabused, sardonic way she contemplated women's complicity, either unwitting or sickly collusive, in their own degradation at the hands of men. Perhaps her most horrifyingly funny work of the time was the painting "Try to Be More Accommodating" (1991), in which penises penetrate a woman's mouth, nostril, ear, and eye. It's a bloody, violent picture, but it remains unclear whether it is simply a caricature of male domination or something more ironic.

In "Autumn Palette," Williams' show of new paintings, collages, and monotypes (303 gallery, at 89 Greene Street; through November 26), the artist expands her repertoire beyond messily rendered cartoons of the war between the sexes. The exhibition title alludes to the prevailing color scheme of these works: ochres, browns, and greens predominate. Previously, Williams' sensibility displayed little conventional painterliness; a brutish Expressionism seemed to suit the emotional and physical chaos that was her preferred subject matter. In these new works, she uses smaller brushstrokes—sometimes delicate, wispy, almost fussy, sometimes nervously scratched. Williams' layering of paint and images—in "The Inquisition," for example, a ghostly white wash clouds the painting's yellowy-brown ground—creates a dreamlike palimpsest. And, as in her earlier work, painted texts continue to proffer snippets of implied narrative. In "Robert Chambers Sitting on a Fence," Williams doesn't directly illustrate the infamous preppy-murder case, but instead, beside an image of a hanged man, she etches the legend "No act of love however small is ever wasted."

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Lucie Rie / Hans Coper: Masterworks by Two British Potters." Opens Nov. 15. . . . ¶ "Willem de Kooning: Paintings." This exhibition of the great Abstract Expressionist's masterworks, which originated at the National Gallery, in Washington, has opened here without much of a bang. But you won't find more exciting painting anywhere in town. The New York exhibition has been augmented by several canvases that weren't seen in Washington, including "Marilyn Monroe" (1954), a powerful evocation of soft female sexuality. Unlike most of the terrifying de Kooning women, it's actually alluring. (There is a concurrent show of de Kooning's work at the Stone gallery.) . . . ¶ "The Photographs of Édouard Baldus: Landscapes and Monuments of France." Shots from the nineteenth century. . . . ¶ "Origins of Impressionism" begins with paintings seen at the historic and influential Salon of 1859 and includes nudes, landscapes, and still-lifes. . . . ¶ Gowns, daywear, and costume jewelry by Mme. Grès, a French designer active from 1930 to 1988, are on display in the Costume Institute. Through Nov. 27. . . . ¶ Fifteen objects from the Chalcolithic period (4500-3300 B.C.) that were found in Levant, an area that is now modern-day Israel. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Projects: Ann Hamilton." Opens Nov. 10. . . . ¶ "Rem Koolhaas and the Place of Public Architecture." . . . ¶ "A Century of Artists Books." . . . ¶ "Mapping" features some twenty works of art devoted to the role of cartographic fact and fantasy in contemporary art. The exhibit includes excellent examples of conceptual-oriented works of the sixties and seventies by Smithson, LeWitt, and Broodthaers. . . . ¶ "American Politicians: Photographs from 1843 to 1993" includes a Mathew Brady photograph of Abraham Lincoln. . . . ¶ "Cy Twombly: A Retrospective." Nearly a hundred works, mostly paintings, by this heir to Abstract Expressionism. The show begins with Twombly's assemblage sculptures and ends with a new painting series, "The Four Seasons," done this year. (A concurrent show of his works is at the Gagosian gallery.) . . . ¶ "The Prints of Louise Bourgeois" focusses on the artist's etchings and lithographs, including "He Disappeared Into Complete Silence" (1946-47) and "Ste. Sebastienne" (1992). (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-68." (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art." Opens Nov. 10. . . . ¶ "Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951-93." Through Dec. 4. . . . ¶ "Neil Jenney: Natural Rationalism." Oil-on-wood landscape paintings from the past fifteen years, by the genius of the short-lived "bad painting" movement of the late sixties and early seventies. Jenney's landscapes speak to the anxieties of the post-industrial era rather than reflecting the expansive optimism of traditional American landscape; they're characterized by a dry, finicky, seamless finish; the paintings are airtight, formally as well atmospherically. Through Dec. 11. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

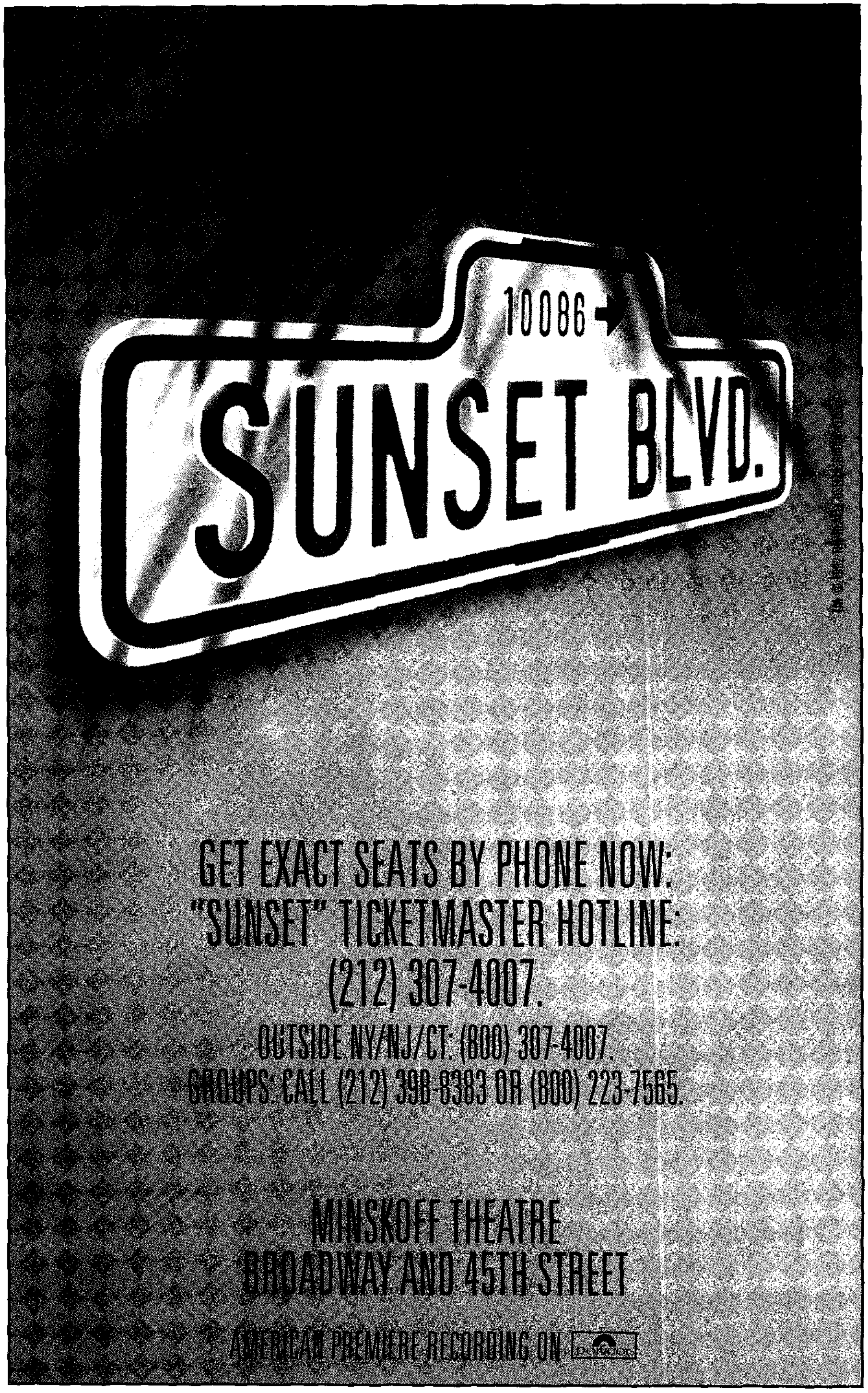
American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Royal Tombs of Sipán." Gold, silver, and gilded copper objects of the Moche, a pre-Inca civilization of northern Peru and one of the world's major ancient civilizations. The curators are probably right to identify Sipán as the richest burial site ever excavated in the New World. . . . ¶ "Empires Beyond the Great Wall: The Heritage of Genghis Khan." Through Nov. 27. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Realms of Heroism: Indian Paintings at the Brooklyn Museum." . . . ¶ Dale Chihuly's "The Brooklyn Wall," an installation of blown glass, is on view in the lobby. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway—"Hell: Luis Cruz Azaceta, Selected Works, 1978-93." Through Nov. 23. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Revivals! Diverse Traditions: 1920-45," the second installment in a project devoted to American craft in the twentieth century, focusses on contributions of African American, Appalachian, Hispanic, and Native American practitioners. The kitschiest artifact is a circa-1940 beaded vest (emblazoned with "Tourist's Paradise, Minnesota 10,000 Lakes") made as a promotional item by a member of the Ojibwa tribe—a spectacular piece of advertising! (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Good Offices and Beyond: The Evolution of the Workplace" surveys the development of equipment designed to manage paper, numbers, time, and information, beginning with the invention of the paper clip in 1900 and ending with a concept model for a personal



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ART—Cont'd

digital assistant (non-human, that is). The show invites audience participation: viewers can test and rate fifteen ergonomic chairs from various manufacturers, and fill out a questionnaire about what makes a good office. One respondent, apparently unfazed by the plethora of advanced technology and erring on the side of the politically incorrect, wrote, "A good office is an office with a girl named Leticia." (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—"Worlds Envisioned: Alighiero e Boetti and Frédéric Bruly Bouabré." . . . ¶ "Andy Warhol: The Last Supper Paintings." . . . ¶ Irish artist James Coleman's "Projected Images, 1972-94" includes "La Tache Aveugle," "Seeing for Oneself," and "I.N.I.T.I.A.L.S." . . . ¶ "Rest," by Franz West, an installation of twenty-seven couches on the center's roof. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St.—"Judith Leiber: The Artful Handbag." Opens Nov. 15. . . . ¶ "Hello Again! Recycling for the Real World." Products, from dresses to furniture, made from recycled and reused materials. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8, and Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Forbes Magazine Galleries, Fifth Ave. at 12th St.—"Ladies of the Brush." Paintings by Victorian women, including Rebecca Solomon and Evelyn Pickering De Morgan. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 4.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"John Constable: Drawings, Watercolors, Oil Sketches, and Paintings from a Private Collection." Opens Nov. 15. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St.—"Curator's Choice 1: Kasper König presents Andreas Exner and Tamara Grcic." Opens Nov. 11. (Open Tuesdays and Thursdays, noon to 7; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Every Picture Tells a Story: Word and Image in American Folk Art." Everything from a pre-Revolutionary illustrated birth certificate to a more contemporary text: "Try Me," painted on tin roofing. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"A New York Holiday." . . . ¶ "City Farmers: Operation GreenThumb." . . . ¶ "The Making of a Mural: Reginald Marsh at the Custom House." (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S.—"Contemporary African-American Artists: 1980-94." Opens Nov. 11. Through Nov. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 2 to 5.)

National Museum of the American Indian, 1 Bowling Green—"Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native American Identity and Belief." . . . ¶ "All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture." . . . ¶ "This Path We Travel: Celebrations of Contemporary Native American Creativity." (Open daily, 10 to 5:30.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Visiting Hours: An Installation by Bob Flanagan in Collaboration with Sheree Rose." Flanagan, who has cystic fibrosis, will hold public visiting hours from his hospital-bed installation, where he will be available to discuss his illness and masochism. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Garbage! The History and Politics of Trash in New York City." Opens Nov. 12. . . . ¶ "e.e. cummings @ 100: An Anniversary Exhibition." (Open Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"Georges Barrère and the Flute in America." Opens Nov. 12. . . . ¶ "Screams on Screen: 100 Years of Horror Films." . . . ¶ "Noguchi at the Dance" documents the sculptor's work with choreographers from Ruth Page to Martha Graham. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Works from every period of the Japanese-American sculptor's life (1904-88) are installed in a garden and open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photo-engraving factory. Closes for the season on Nov. 30. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City—"The Winter of Love." From the editors of the Parisian magazine *Purple Prose* comes a continually changing, multitheme show. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy." Original recordings, a trumpet from the twenties, and work by Stuart Davis, Weegee, and Annie Leibovitz, among others, chronicle the life of America's most famous trumpeter. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St.—"Art in the Service of the Lord: Sacred Art of the Black Church." Contemporary art with religious themes. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

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Socrates Sculpture Park, Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City—"International '94" includes work by Gunilla Bandolin, Mark di Suvero, and Nancy Rubins. (Open daily, 10 to sunset.)

Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St.—"The Art of Sotho Habitation: Photographs of Mural Painting in Southern Africa." A hundred color photographs by Gary van Wyk, of murals on the exteriors of homes. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 1 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)

Paul Cadmus—Still-lifes, portraits, and tableaux, by an artist better known for his male nudes. Opens Nov. 11. Through Dec. 30. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Arnaldo Roche-Rabell—Paintings by a Puerto Rican artist, reflecting the social interaction between the United States and his homeland. Opens Nov. 12. Through Dec. 30. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Steve Wheeler (1912-91)—Intricate modernist paintings indebted to Native American art, in a show inaugurating the gallery's new uptown space. Opens Nov. 11. Through Dec. 17. (Snyder, 20 W. 57th St.)

"Drawn to Text: Comix Artists as Book Illustrators"—An international survey of the history of alternative comics that also shows how Robert Crumb, Javier Mariscal, Lorenzo Mattotti, Jacques Tardi, and Art Spiegelman approach book illustrations. Opens Nov. 15. Through Jan. 17. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

"The Music Box Project"—Music boxes designed by contemporary artists, among them Vito Acconci, Laurie Anderson, John Cage, and Nam June Paik. Opens Nov. 9. Through Dec. 3. (Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. Open Mondays, and Saturdays at noon.)

"Print Fair"—Ninety-three North American and European dealers offer a range from Bruegel to Picasso. (7th Regiment Armory, Seventh Ave. at 66th St. Nov. 11, from 11 to 8, and Nov. 12-13, from 11 to 7. Tickets at the door on the days of the fair.)

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Barnett Newman (1905-70) / **Kiki Smith**—"The Sublime Is Now," a show of formative works (1944-49) by one of this century's most important painters. Around 1939-40, Newman stopped painting, resuming only in 1944 after having destroyed all of his early work. The art in this show—the first that he chose to preserve—represents a new beginning. Newman's early mature work is full of portentous cosmic imagery, and the results are occasionally comic, as in an untitled crayon sketch from 1944 that looks like a child's rendering of a duck. But this show captures the arc between the artist's awkward rebirth and the fruition of "Onement I" (1948), the first painting in which he employed the "zip," his characteristic vertical dividing line. / Collages and lithographs—new mediums for the artist—depicting body parts. Through Nov. 26. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Corneille—Paintings and works on paper by a founder of the Cobra group, some of which reveal primitive influences. Through Nov. 27. (Avanti, 22 E. 72nd St. Open Mondays.)

Elaine de Kooning (1918-89)—A suite of portraits of men and a solitary self-portrait. One work, "Bill" (1953), has a weighty, carnal presence—it's almost reminiscent of Giacometti—but the face is a ghostly blur; a canvas of the dapper critic Harold Rosenberg, on the other hand, depicts a head in the vortex of a brilliant-colored scrawl. Through Nov. 19. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

Willem de Kooning—Fifty-five paintings from the early thirties to the late sixties. Through Jan. 22. (A retrospective of the artist's work is currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum.) (Stone, 113 E. 90th St.)

Niki de Saint Phalle—A double show of "Tableaux Éclatés," paintings affixed with colorful figures and viewer-activated sensors that cause the figures to break apart and come together again. Through Dec. 17. (Davidson and James Goodman, both at 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Alberto Giacometti (1901-66)—Sixty-three sculptures and ten paintings, ranging from the early twenties to 1965. Through Dec. 10. General admission is five dollars. (Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Judy Glantzman—Paintings of female figures, investigating female adolescence and womanhood. Through Dec. 3. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Rebecca Horn—New mechanical sculptures and an installation. Through Dec. 31. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

William King—A retrospective covering forty years of work in wood. Through Nov. 26. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Leonid Lamm—Paintings and drawings by a Russian émigré. Through Dec. 22. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

Richard Serra—Black-and-white crayon-stick drawings of loose rectangles. Through Dec. 23. (Gagosian, Madison Ave. at 76th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Rafael Ferrer—Tropical landscapes, a painted tent called "El Gran Canibal," and sculptures of pineapples. Opens Nov. 12. Through Dec. 7. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Michael Hurson—Drawings of diverse subjects: a brick drinking fountain, a dancer, a takeoff of Picasso's "Guernica." Opens Nov. 9. Through Dec. 3. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Constance Kheel—Paintings with circles, meant to evoke celestial images. Opens Nov. 12. Through Dec. 12. (Vega, 107 Mercer St.)

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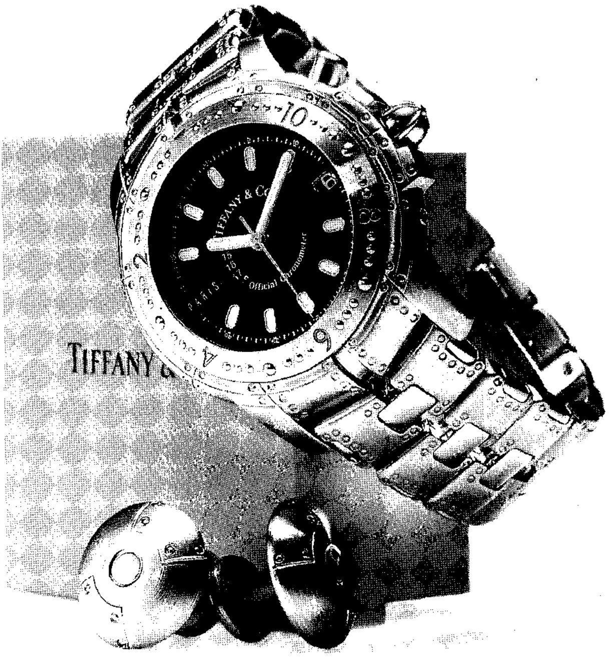

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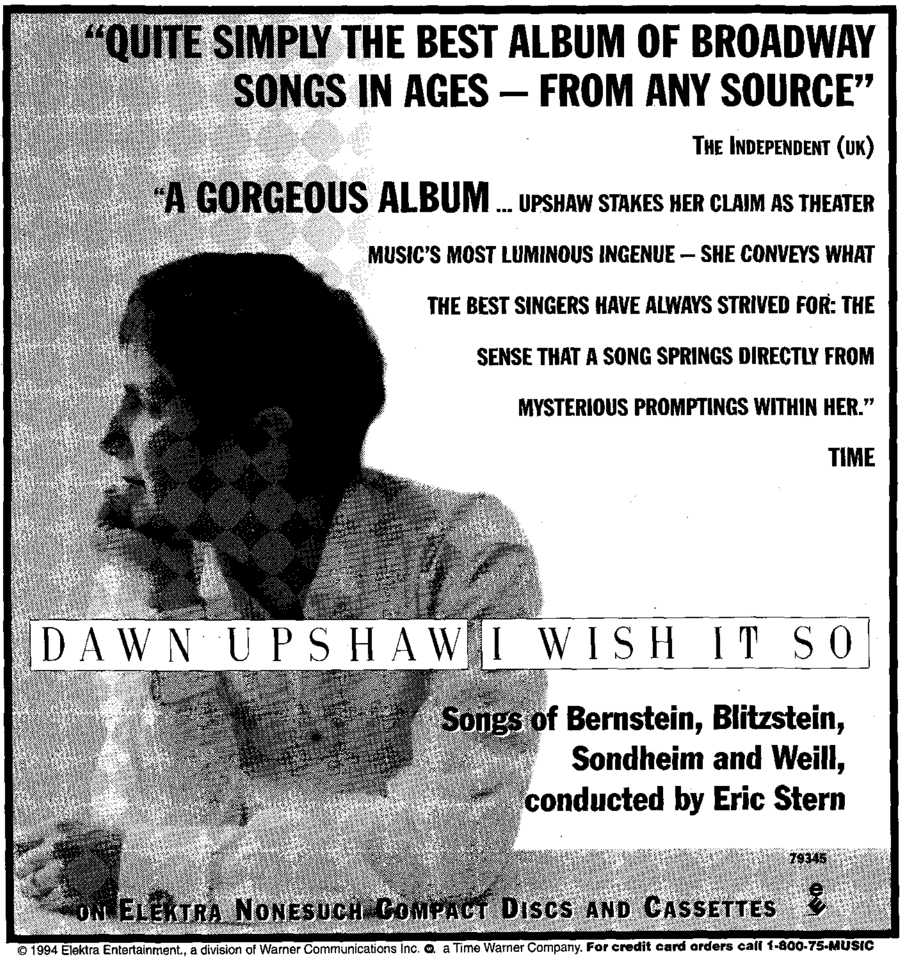

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ART—Cont'd

ROXIE MUNRO—Cityscapes. Opens Nov. 15. Through Dec. 10. (Bibro, 584 Broadway.)

TOM PALMORE—Whimsical paintings of animals. Opens Nov. 12. Through Dec. 8. (Cacciola, 125 Wooster St.)

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DAVID NYZIO—Startling interweavings of natural processes and artistic effects by an astutely heterodox young artist whose work is often as beautiful as it is weird. The checklist of titles and materials conveys some of his eccentricity: "Three Generations of Life and Death" (1993), for example, is made of "bug excrement, ink, paper." Nyzio's favorite material—or should we say collaborator?—is algae. In the gallery's project room he has installed a work in progress, "Adventures in Articulation" (1994), in which light-sensitive algae is being used to "grow a photo" of the artist's naked body. The negative has been placed above a pool of water and a sheet of paper at the bottom, and the whole thing has been exposed to a strong light source. The resulting "strong smell," the gallery notes, "should disappear after the first week (we hope)." Through Nov. 12. (The project work remains on view through Dec. 23.) (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER—Constructions made of unfinished planks and plywood, suggestive of furniture. Through Dec. 17. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

ELLSWORTH KELLY—Recent paintings in the inaugural show of a new satellite space for the uptown gallery. Through Jan. 29. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

MARTIN KIPPENBERGER—Abstract bronze reliefs mounted in boxes. Through Dec. 3. (Nolan-Eckman, 560 Broadway.)

DENNIS OPPENHEIM—Witty conceptual floor and wall sculptures, many of them kinetic. Through Nov. 26. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

SUSAN ROTHENBERG—A dozen paintings reflecting the artist's surroundings in Galisteo, New Mexico, where she lives on a ranch with her husband, Bruce Nauman. Fragmented images, including animals, shards of pottery, skulls and bones—and, in "Calling the Dogs," clapping hands—are incorporated into heavily reworked abstract grounds. Through Dec. 17. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

LUCAS SAMARAS—Gray Formica sculptures shaped like cubes and trapezoids. Through Nov. 26. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

CY TWOMBLY—"Untitled Painting," a monumental, primarily abstract triptych, begun in Italy in 1979. Through Dec. 17. (A retrospective of the artist's work is at the Museum of Modern Art.) (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

SUE WILLIAMS—New works. Through Nov. 26. (303, at 89 Greene St.)

AUCTIONS

THE BIGGIES—New York's two major auction houses are turning up Impressionist- and modern-art sales this week. At Sotheby's, on Nov. 8 at 7, the spotlight will be on Modigliani's painting of his mistress while she was pregnant with their second child, "Portrait de Jeanne Hebuterne" (1919; estimate upon request). Follow-up sales, on Nov. 9 at 10:15 and 2, will include paintings and sculptures by Monet, Marini, and Duchamp-Villon. (York Ave. at 72nd St. For further information, call 606-7000.) . . . ¶ At Christie's, on Nov. 9 at 7 and Nov. 10 at 10 and 2, works from the collection of the late Alice Tully, the renowned philanthropist who died last year, will take center stage. Among them is Monet's "Nymphéas" (1907; estimate: $4-$6 million). (Park Ave. at 59th St. For further information, call 546-1119.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

One Good Eye

"CYCLOPS," a superb book of black-and-white photographs by Albert Watson, has just been published by Bulfinch Press/Little, Brown. (The title refers both to the camera's eye and to the fact that Watson has been blind in one eye since birth.) With more than two hundred and fifty pictures, the book offers an ambitious survey of two decades of his advertising, magazine, documentary, and personal work, but its design and technological sophistication are impressive, too. Richard Benson supervised the digital reproduction of the images, and his innovations have resulted in photographs on the page that are virtually indistinguishable from original prints. The successfully experimental typography, which incorporates nearly forty typefaces, was designed by David Carson, the man behind the look of the rock-music monthly *Ray Gun*.

Watson, a Scot who moved to the States in 1970, has photographed a wide range of subjects, and thanks to the design and layout of "Cyclops," the heterogeneous content unfolds in dramatic and surprising ways. The book includes well-known portraits of musicians (Eric Clapton, Sade, Keith Richards), movie stars (Jack Nicholson, Drew Barrymore), and artists (Jeff Koons, Cindy Sherman), as well as fashion shots, nudes, still-lifes, landscapes, and photos of cultural artifacts (fetish bundles from Marrakech, a pistol owned by Elvis). Watson's consistency is a real achievement: the commercial work is as intense and committed as the pictures that he shot for his own pleasure. With this spectacular book, a talent whose presence may have been taken for granted has staked a powerful claim.

ILSE BING—Vintage photographs of Parisian dance halls. Through Jan. 7. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

ROBERT FRANK—Twenty-seven rarely seen images from the photographer of "The Americans." Through Nov. 23. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

GJON MILI (1904-84)—Photographs of actors, entertainers, and other celebrities, taken between 1930 and 1970. Through Dec. 3. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

ISABEL MUÑOZ—Photographs of flamenco and tango dancing in Madrid and Buenos Aires. Through Nov. 12. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

MARIO CRAVO NETO—Black-and-white prints by a Brazilian photographer. Through Dec. 3. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

NICHOLAS NIXON—Photographs of schoolchildren and nurses. Through Nov. 26. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

LEO RUBINFIEN—Photographs taken from airplanes. Through Dec. 10. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

NICK WAPLINGTON—Ten large-scale images by an artist best known for surreptitiously placing his own image within his landscape photography. Through Dec. 3. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

GARRY WINOGRAND—New York City burlesque houses, circa 1954. Through Nov. 26. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Wallach Art Gallery.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Music for the Masses

EVERY so often, an accomplished early-music instrumentalist gathers a large group of colleagues around and then claims conductor status. Most remain chamber musicians at heart; few develop into masters of the baton. (In his entertaining book "The Maestro Myth," the English critic Norman Lebrecht wryly dismissed a bunch of them as "semi-conductors.")

Not so Philippe Herreweghe, who will pay a rare visit to New York on November 10 to conduct the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall. Trained as a psychiatrist in his native Ghent, Herreweghe had already won acclaim as a harpsichordist and choral director before deciding in the late seventies to abandon the couch for the podium. Since then, he has founded a succession of ensembles specializing in distinct repertoires, including the Ensemble Musique Oblique for contemporary music, the period-instrument Orchestre des Champs-Élysées for Classical and Romantic symphonies, and the two choruses that will join him at Carnegie Hall, the Collegium Vocale de Gand and La Chapelle Royale. His program, a subtly constructed "concept concert" comprising three highly personalized takes on the Roman Catholic Mass, suggests the breadth of his taste. Stravinsky's liturgically strict Mass acknowledges its lineage by drawing on musical styles that date back to the Middle Ages. Fauré's Requiem, the program's sublime potboiler, sets only the portions of the Mass for the Dead that stress peace and repose. Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's obscure cantata "Vom Tod im Wald" started life as part of their "Berliner Requiem," which reinterprets the Requiem Mass as acerbic social criticism. Smart programming, smart conductor, smart concert.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA** (with Maria Guleghina, Fabio Armiliato, and Timothy Noble) and **PAGLIACCI** (with Diana Soviero, Vladimir Atlantov, Sherrill Milnes, and Mark Oswald); Christian Badea conducting both. (Nov. 9 at 8.) . . . With Bruno Pola as Alfio, in "Cav." (Nov. 12 at 1:30.) . . . With Ms. Guleghina, Kristján Jóhannsson, and Mr. Pola in "Cav," and Ljuba Kazarnovskaya and Messrs. Atlantov, Milnes, and Oswald in "Pag"; Mr. Badea. (Nov. 15 at 8.) . . . **LADY MACBETH OF MTSENSK,** by Shostakovich, in the opening of a new production, with Maria Ewing, Vladimir Galouzine, Mark Baker, and Sergei Koptchak; James Conlon. (Nov. 10 and Nov. 14 at 8.) . . . **ARABELLA,** with Kiri Te Kanawa, Marie McLaughlin, Heidi Grant Murphy, Helga Dernesch, David Kuebler, Hans-

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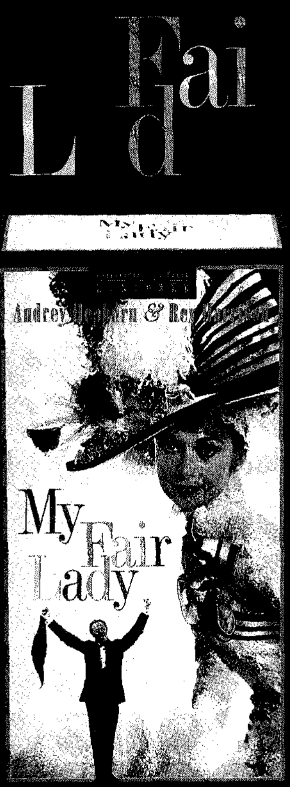

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CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Joachim Ketelsen, and Donald McIntyre; Christian Thielemann. (Nov. 11 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with Sumi Jo, Alfredo Kraus, and Paolo Gavanelli; Mr. Badea. (Nov. 12 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—Presenting Leonard Bernstein's "Wonderful Town." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Nov. 9-11 and Nov. 15 at 8; Nov. 12 at 1:30 and 8; and Nov. 13 at 1:30. Through Nov. 20.)

OPERA MANHATTAN—Final performance of Dukas's "Ariane et Barbe-bleue." (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Nov. 9 at 8. For information about tickets, call 315-3161.)

NEW YORK GRAND OPERA—Vincent La Selva conducts excerpts from Verdi's "I Lombardi," "Ernani," "I Due Foscari," "Giovanna d'Arco," and "Alzira." (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 10 at 8.)

AMERICAN CHAMBER OPERA COMPANY—Staging Robert Cantrick's "Three Mimes" and Lee Hoiby's "This Is the Rill Speaking." (Murphy Auditorium, Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. Nov. 11-12 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-0857.)

MEASURED BREATHS THEATRE COMPANY—The ensemble, which can be depended upon to provide an unusual perspective on the operas it performs, offers a staging, in English, of Rameau's "Those Fabulous Americans" (better known as "Les Indes Galantes," under which title it was premièred, in 1735). Braden Toan conducts. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. Nov. 11-14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 334-8402. Through Nov. 21.)

CHARLESTON OPERA—Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess," on tour from the city in which the action is based; featuring soprano Vanessa Stewart and baritone Brian Gibson. (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. Nov. 12 at 8.)

"REEL-TO-REEL HARMONY"—The Brooklyn Museum's festival of films featuring great classical singers opens on Nov. 10. See details under "Film Libraries" in The Movies.

Philippe Herreweghe conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall.

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Hugh Wolff conducts the première of Stephen Albert's Symphony No. 2 (with its orchestration completed by Sebastian Currier, following the composer's death in 1992), Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Leon Fleisher marking the fiftieth anniversary of his début with the orchestra), and Dvořák's Symphony No. 5. (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 10-12 at 8.) . . . ¶ The Prokofiev and Dvořák works, as above, scheduled for the after-work crowd. (Nov. 15 at 6:45.)

CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA OF ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA—Kent Tritle directs Arvo Pärt's "Miserere," Monteverdi's "Laetatus Sum," and Stravinsky's Mass. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Nov. 9 at 8.)

RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY—George Rothman conducts string-orchestra works by Biber, Bach, Stravinsky, and Poul Ruders (his Violin Concerto, with Rolf Schulte). (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 9 at 8.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S—Philippe Herreweghe directs Weill's cantata "Vom Tod im Wald," Stravinsky's Mass, and Fauré's Requiem; with the chorus of La Chapelle Royale, the Collegium Vocale de Gand, and soloists Agnès Mellon (soprano) and Peter Kooy (baritone). (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 10 at 8.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC—John Adams conducts his own works and several by Ives; with baritone Thomas Hampson. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Nov. 11-12 at 8.)

PHILHARMONIA VIRTUOSI—Richard Kapp conducts Haydn's Symphony No. 93, Steven Gerber's Serenade for Strings, and (with soprano Camellia Johnson) an excerpt from Menotti's "The Consul" and Wagner's "Wesendonck" Lieder. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 12 at 7.)

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—The conductorless ensemble performs Haydn's Symphony No. 52, Britten's "Les Illuminations" (with soprano Benita Valente), selections from Mendelssohn's incidental music for "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and Beethoven's "Grosse Fuge" (enlarged from its original string-quartet setting by Felix Weingartner). (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 12 at 8.)

CAPPELLA ORATORIANA—Dennis Bernard Delaney directs late-Renaissance and early-Baroque sacred music from the Netherlands. (Oratory Church of St. Boniface, Willoughby and Duffield Sts., Brooklyn. Nov. 12 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 875-2096.)

CITY ISLAND BAROQUE ENSEMBLE—Anton Miller is featured in Bach's A-Minor Violin Concerto, Alexis Gerlach moves to center stage for a Vivaldi cello concerto, and Michelle Baker takes a solo turn in Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 1. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Nov. 13 at noon.)

NEW AMERICAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—Beth Cohen conducts Mozart's F-Major Divertimento (K. 138), Hindemith's "Trauermusik," Schnittke's "Moz-Art à la Haydn," and concertos by Vivaldi and Bach; Aaron Kernis conducts his own "Musica Celestis." (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 15 at 8.)

RECITALS

CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF AND LEIF OVE ANDSNES—The violinist and the pianist perform sonatas by Beethoven (in A Major, Op. 30, No. 1), Ravel, and Janáček, as well as Schubert's B-Minor Rondo. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 9 at 8.)

SEQUENTIA—The early-music ensemble's male singers perform medieval narrative settings of stories from the Bible. (Church of the Blessed Sacrament, 152 W. 71st St. Nov. 9 at 8. For information about tickets, call 666-9266.)

ASSAD DUO—Performing original works and arrangements for two classical guitars. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 9 at 8.)

BARGEMUSIC—Chamber music by Prokofiev, Haydn, and Saint-Saëns, with violinist Nai-Yuan Hu, cellist Peter Wyrick, and pianist Phillip Bush. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Nov. 10 at 7:30 and Nov. 13 at 4.)

CAMPHILL VILLAGE BENEFIT CONCERT—A wide-ranging program that includes appearances by soprano Shirley Verrett, flutist Paula Robison, and pianists Emanuel Ax, Dick Hyman, Anne-Marie McDermott, and Charles Wadsworth. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 838-2660.)

SONIC BOOM FESTIVAL—The third annual contemporary-music festival continues. Nov. 10 at 8: The AACM Ensemble performs music by Muhal Richard Abrams. . . . ¶ Nov. 13 at 7:30: Newband offers works by Harry Partch, Dean Drummond, David Lang, and others. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799.)

AMERICAN FESTIVAL OF MICROTONAL MUSIC—The annual exploration of music that employs non-traditional tunings and minute divisions of the octave. Nov. 10: Works by Gesualdo, Iannis Xenakis, John Cage, Johnny Reinhard, Sven-David Sandström, Anatol Vieru, and Jon Catler. . . . ¶ Nov. 11: Works by Mr. Reinhard, György Ligeti (his String Quartet No. 2), Neil Haverstick, Handel (his F-Major Recorder Sonata, using a historic quarter-comma mean-tone tuning), Mayumi Reinhard, and Larry Polansky. . . . ¶ Nov. 12: Music by Lassus, Harry Partch, Wendy Carlos, György Kurtág, Robert Erickson, Dieter Jordi, and Ron Kozak. (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University; enter at Broadway and 116th St. Evenings at 8. For information about tickets, call 517-3550.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—Presenting Dohnányi's Serenade for String Trio; Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp; and Beethoven's Septet for Strings and Winds. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 11 at 8 and Nov. 13 at 5.)

MARK ANDERSON—The winner of this year's William Kapell Piano Competition performs three of Debussy's preludes, Bartók's "Improvisations" (Op. 20), Liszt's "Après une Lecture de Dante," and Brahms' F-Minor Sonata. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 12 at 8.)

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG—Performing Viennese lieder from the turns of three centuries: from circa 1800 (by Haydn and Beethoven); from the decadent twilight of Romanticism (by Zemlinsky, Wolf, Strauss, Pfitzner, Schreker, Berg, Mahler, and Schoenberg); and from our current fin de siècle (excerpts from Kurt Schwertsik's "Es friert zuweilen auch den Geist"); with soprano Cheryl Parrish, mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, baritone William Sharp, and pianists Steven Blier and Michael Barrett. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 12 at 8.)

ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY MUSIC—Presenting Italian music from the late trecento and early quattrocento. (St. James Chapel, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Nov. 12 at 8 and Nov. 13 at 3. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

BORODIN STRING QUARTET—Playing Shostakovich's seventh, eighth, and ninth quartets. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 13 at 2.)

ISAAC STERN—The violinist performs sonatas by Beethoven (in A Major, Op. 12, No. 2), Franck, and Bartók (his Second), among other works; with pianist Robert McDonald. (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. Nov. 13 at 2.)

KURT OLLMANN AND STEVEN MAYER—The baritone and the pianist perform music by Ives, with much commentary interspersed. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Nov. 13 at 2:10.)

VAGRAM SARADJIAN—Cellist, playing works by Schumann, Shostakovich, and others; with pianist Volodymyr Vynnytsky. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 13 at 3.)

PETER VINOGRADE—The pianist's program includes Bach's D-Major Toccata and sonatas by Beethoven (in C Minor, Op. 111) and Nicholas Flagello. (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. Nov. 13 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

TIM BOWER

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CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Flutefest—The New York Flute Club observes the semicentennial of the death of its founder, Georges Barrère, with a program of his flute transcriptions and works that were composed at his instigation. The performers include flutists John Wion and Samuel Baron (a Barrère student long ago). (Paul Hall, Juilliard School, 60 Lincoln Center Plaza. Nov. 13 at 5:30. For information about tickets, call 757-8339.)

Look Sharp—Violist Ori Kam, cellist Iris Regev, and pianist Ilan Rechtman perform chamber music by Schumann, Hindemith, and Mr. Rechtman, as well as Beethoven's E-Flat Major Duo for Viola and Cello (WoO 32). The title the composer inscribed on this brief piece—"Duett mit zwei obligaten Augengläsern" ("Duet with Two Obbligato Eyeglasses")—has given rise to some consternation over the years. Whether it refers to myopic performers or to the challenge of deciphering Beethoven's own execrable penmanship is anyone's guess. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Nov. 13 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Christopher Parkening—The classical guitarist. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 13 at 8.)

Jack Gibbons—This high-spirited English pianist, a specialist in the music of Gershwin, performs his own historically informed piano arrangements (or transcriptions from piano rolls) of more than a dozen of Gershwin's songs. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 13 at 8.)

Simone Pedroni—The first-prize laureate of the 1993 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition performs Bach's Sixth "English" Suite, Schoenberg's Suite (Op. 25), and sonatas by Haydn (in C Major, No. 50) and Rachmaninoff (his Second). (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 14 at 8.)

Ensemble Rebel—Performing music from the early-seventeenth-century court of Mantua, by Salamone Rossi, Biagio Marini, Carlo Farina, and others. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. Nov. 14 at 8.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

The Radio City Christmas Spectacular—They're baaaaack. The Rockettes, that is. The annual show has previews on Nov. 9-10, opens officially on Nov. 11, and continues through Jan. 8. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. For information about schedules and tickets, call 247-4777.)

"Family Musik"—A new series at the 92nd Street Y kicks off with a musical adaptation of Dr. Seuss's "Green Eggs and Ham" and playwright Terrence McNally's first work for kids, "You and Hugh." Both pieces feature music by Robert Kapilow, the series' creator and conductor, and the singing of soprano Angelina Réaux. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 13 at 2.)

Walt Disney's World on Ice—Presenting "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." Don't worry: Mickey, Minnie, Goofy, the Little Mermaid, and crew will be there, too. Performances start Nov. 15 at 7 and run through Nov. 20. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300.)

Out Loud—Arlene Alda reads from her book "Pig, Horse, Cow, Don't Wake Me Now." (Books of Wonder, 132 Seventh Ave., at 18th St. Nov. 12 at noon. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jon Agee reads from his book "The Incredible Painting of Felix Clousseau" and George Plimpton reads from a work to be announced. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Nov. 13 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

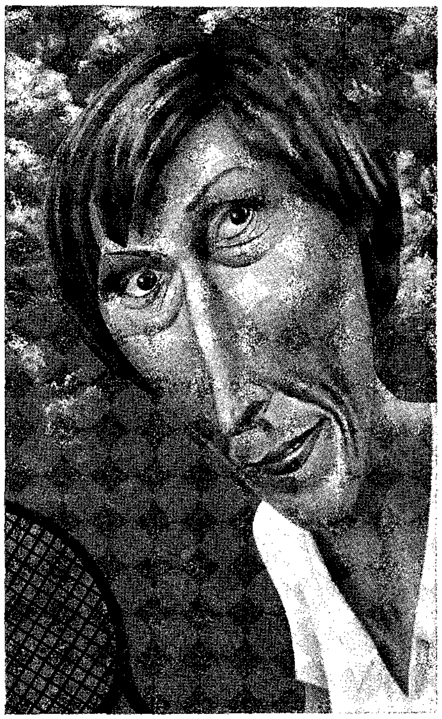
And Don't Forget—Theatreworks/USA's musical version of "Curious George," at the Promenade Theatre, on Nov. 12-13 at 12:30 (677-5959) . . . . ¶ A New York Philharmonic Young People's Concert (with pianist Leon Fleisher) at Avery Fisher Hall, Nov. 12 at 2 (875-5030). . . . ¶ The Big Apple Circus at Lincoln Center, through Jan. 8 (268-0055).

SPORTS

Martina Ultima

On November 15, a banner in honor of Martina Navratilova will be raised to the ceiling of Madison Square Garden, where it will join the retired numbers of such legends as Walt Frazier and Rod Gilbert. Navratilova, who is playing her final professional singles sets at the Virginia Slims Championships (November 14-20), will be right at home hanging with the big boys. No other professional tennis player has won more singles titles (167) or doubles titles (165), and she has earned close to twenty million dollars in professional cash.

Navratilova has come a long way from the pudgy Czech teen who gave Chris Evert a run for her money at the 1973 French Open, and now it's hard to imagine women's tennis without her. Sitting in a Garden conference room, stroking her miniature fox terrier, K.D. (for Killer Dog), she laughs easily as she talks about her plans to play "hit and giggle" tennis, to take up snowboarding (partly because "the gear looks so cool"), and to write. Does she anticipate making it to the finals at the Garden, her favorite indoor venue? "I anticipate playing my first match," she answers firmly. "I can't take anything for granted anymore. Every day is a struggle for me on the court, a struggle to find the game I once had. It used to come easily, and now I have to work for it."



Martina Navratilova.

BLAIR DRAWSON

TENNIS

Virginia Slims Championships—Women's tennis greats, including last year's winner, Steffi Graf, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Conchita Martinez, and Mary Pierce, will compete. Two singles matches and a doubles match will be played each night. On Nov. 15, there will be a tribute to Martina Navratilova. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6500. Nov. 14-15 at 5:30. Through Nov. 20.)

BASKETBALL

Knicks—Vs. the Orlando Magic, Nov. 10 at 8.

Nets—Vs. the Chicago Bulls, Nov. 9 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Houston Rockets, Nov. 12 at 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Seattle Supersonics, Nov. 15 at 7:30.

FOOTBALL

Giants—Vs. the Arizona Cardinals, Nov. 13 at 1.

Jets—Away until Nov. 27, when they'll host the Miami Dolphins.

(The Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Giants and the Jets at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Vet Fête—To mark Veterans Day, Nov. 11, there will be a parade down Fifth Ave., from 42nd to 23rd Sts., beginning at 10. . . . ¶ Nov. 11, from 3 to 5: Men who served locally will tell Second World War tales of the homefront. (Seaman's Church Institute, 241 Water St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 1: Battlefield and anti-war protest sites are on the agenda for Big Onion Walking Tours' "New York at War and Peace." For more information, call 439-1090.

Barbie Cues—To celebrate the publication of "Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll," by M. G. Lord, the Kitchen will present Café Barbie, the inaugural salon of its new Electronic Café International. Cutting-edge interactive audiovisual hookups will enable panelists from Paris and Santa Monica to discuss the eleven-and-a-half-inch plastic doll with fashion writer Holly Brubach, the Lady Bunny, Lauren Hutton, and Betty Friedan, who will be on hand live in New York. A pre-taped interview with Camille Paglia will kick off the discussion. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Nov. 10 at 8.)

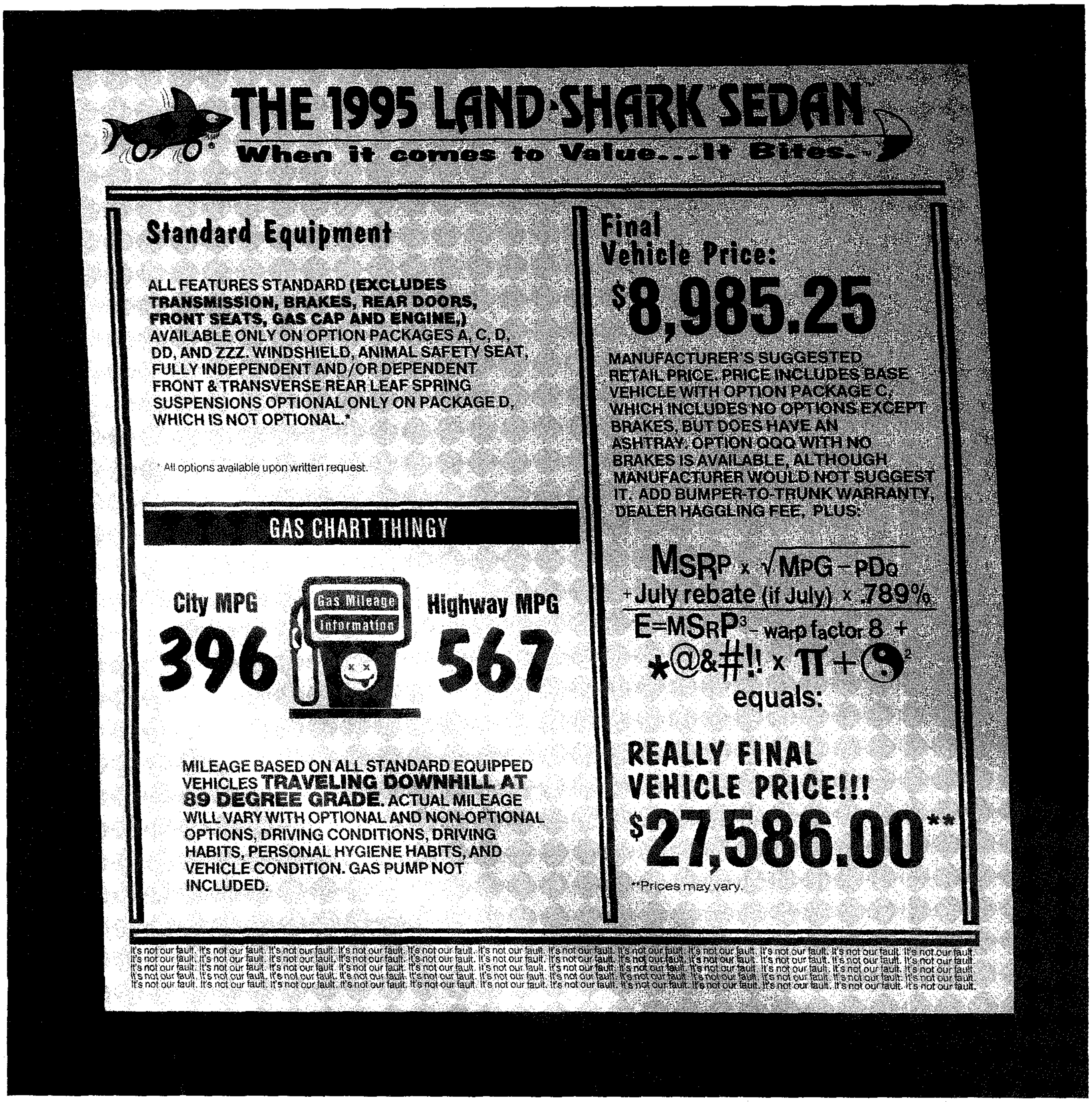
Jung Gwok—A Chinese arts festival, "Jung Gwok: Treasures from Heaven and Earth," will feature a Chinese Lion dancing, Cantonese opera, folk dancing, and face reading. (Prospect Park Picnic House, Prospect Park W. at 3rd St., Brooklyn. Nov. 12-13, from noon to 5. Tickets at the door on the days of the festival.)

Top Shelf—Each of the fifteen 1994 National Book Awards finalists will read for five minutes from his or her nominated book of fiction, poetry, or nonfiction. This year's nominees include William Gaddis, Richard Howard, Heather McHugh, Grace Paley, John Edgar Wideman, and Tobias Wolff. (Equitable Center Auditorium, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. Nov. 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 645-5848.)

Dreamsongs for Berryman—Jorie Graham, Robert Giroux, and Philip Levine will be among those reading from the work of John Berryman, in a tribute to the late poet. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Nov. 15 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Readings—Nov. 10 at 6: Paul Muldoon will read from his new book of poetry, "The Annals of Chile." (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, 1 Washington Mews. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 7: Daniel Berrigan will read from his own poetry. Musical performances will follow. (CBGB's Gallery, 313 Bowery. For information about tickets, call 906-1008.) . . . ¶ Nov. 11 at 7: Jamaica Kincaid will read from her own work. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Square S., at Macdougal St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 8: Yehuda Amichai will read from his new collection of work, "A Life of Poetry, 1948-1994," preceded by a musical performance of "Collage," by Tzvi Avni, who has set Mr. Amichai's poetry to music. (Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, West End Ave. at 86th St. No tickets necessary.)

Walk—Nov. 12 at 1:30: Arthur Marks will focus on movie locations in Greenwich Village. For more information, call 254-1200.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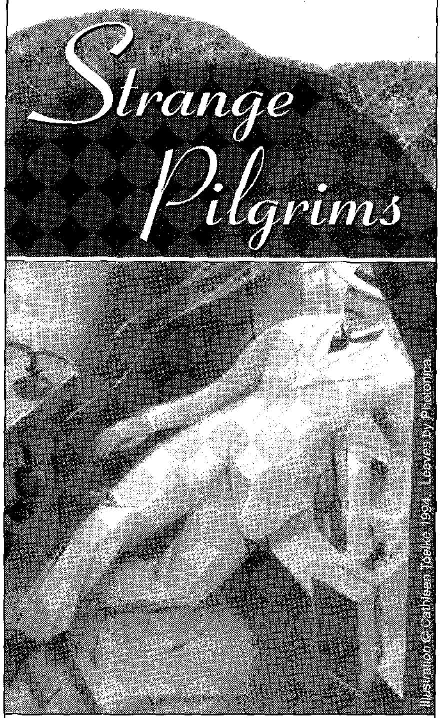
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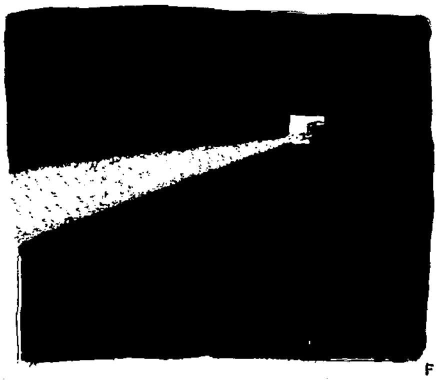


THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Anchoress—Christine Carpenter as a fourteenth-century Briton, fixated on the Virgin Mary and forced to choose between her mother, an accused witch, and the Church. With Natalie Morse, Eugene Bervoets, Toyah Willcox, Peter Postlethwaite, and Christopher Eccleston. Chris Newby directed, and Judith Stanley-Smith and Christine Watkins wrote the screenplay. Opening November 9. (*Film Forum.*)

Dingo—A famous jazz musician (Miles Davis) crash-lands in the Australian outback and befriends a boy who grows up to become a dingo trapper and part-time trumpet player. Colin Friel co-stars. Rolf de Heer's film was shot in 1990, the year before Davis died. Written by Marc Rosenberg. Michel Legrand and Davis collaborated on the score. Opening November 11. (Cinema Village.)

Interview with the Vampire—Director Neil Jordan's version of Anne Rice's novel, from her screenplay, with Tom Cruise as Lestat. Also with Brad Pitt, Stephen Rea, Antonio Banderas, Christian Slater, Kirsten Dunst, and Domiziana Giordano. Opening November 11. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Orpheum VII, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Manhattan by Numbers—Iranian director Amir Naderi's first English-language feature follows an unemployed journalist (John Wojda) as he wanders from Washington Heights to the Lower East Side in search of cash for his back rent. Opening November 11. (Quad Cinema.)

Pontiac Moon—In July, 1969, as the Apollo 11 astronauts travel toward the first manned moon landing, a schoolteacher (Ted Danson) decides to take his young son (Ryan Todd) on a cross-country race to reach Spires of the Moon National Park before the astronauts touch down. With Mary Steenburgen as Danson's agoraphobic wife. Written by Finn Taylor and Jeffrey Brown. Directed by Peter Medak. Opening November 11. (19th Street East 6.)

The Santa Clause—After Santa suffers a workplace accident, a divorced father (Tim Allen, of the TV sitcom "Home Improvement") has to prove himself to his son by stepping into the sleigh and delivering the presents himself. He has second thoughts when he finds his body shaking like a bowlful of jelly. Leo Benvenuti and Steve Rudnick wrote the script, and John Pasquin directed. Opening November 11. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

An Unforgettable Summer—In Lucian Pintilie's film, set in the twenties, a young Romanian army captain and his wife (Claudiu Bleont and Kristin Scott-Thomas) are exiled to a remote border town after the wife rejects the advances of the captain's superior officer. In Romanian. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening November 11. (Quad Cinema and Cinema 3.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 40.)

The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert—Paragons of camp become campers, of sorts, in this cult-pleasing tale of a transsexual (Terence Stamp) and two drag queens (Hugo Weaving and Guy Pearce) who take a lip-synching act from Sydney to a resort in arid central Australia. Stephan Elliott, the writer-director, has one original idea—posing creatures of the night in wild sunbaked settings. As crossover drag sagas go, it's neither as robustly funny as "La Cage aux Folles" nor as lively and poetic as the best parts of "Outrageous!"—M.S. (Village East Cinemas and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Barcelona—The second film by the writer and director Whit Stillman ("Metropolitan") is a culture-clash comedy about a pair of conservative young Americans (played by Taylor Nichols and Chris Eigeman) in early-eighties Barcelona. Although the picture begins promisingly, its charm peters out fast. Every scene seems to make the same not very interesting point: that Americans get a bum rap from foreigners. Stillman's style is placid and a little smug—prematurely gray. In just two movies he has found the sort of rut that most filmmakers take decades to settle into. Also with Tushka Bergen and Mira Sorvino.—T.R. (8/15/94) (Quad Cinema and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Bullets Over Broadway—A nicely structured piece of silliness from Woody Allen, set in the theatre world of the nineteen-twenties. John Cusack is the Woody substitute, an earnest young playwright who needs to discover an existence beyond the stage; Chazz Palminteri steals the picture as the taciturn gangster who swaps places with him, becoming as ruthless in his aesthetics as he is with a gun. Around this neat switch Allen assembles a crowd of near-caricatures—opportunities for Dianne Wiest, Jim Broadbent, Jennifer Tilly, and others to show their stuff.—A.L. (10/24/94) (19th Street East 6, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Clerks—The first feature by twenty-three-year-old writer-director Kevin Smith chronicles a day in the life of an Asbury Park, New Jersey, convenience-store clerk. With Brian O'Halloran, Jeff Anderson, and Marilyn Ghigliotti. (Angelika Film Center and 68th St. Playhouse.)

Double Dragon—A mystical martial-arts adventure set in post-apocalyptic Southern California, where a terrible earthquake has left anarchy and devastation in its wake. Robert Patrick ("Terminator 2") is a sinister gang leader battling with the forces of good (represented by Julia Nickson, Scott Walsh, Mark Decascos, and Alyssa Milano). Directed by Jim Yukich. (New York Twin, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Eat Drink Man Woman—Another film comedy from Ang Lee, the director of "The Wedding Banquet." The aging Mr. Chu (Sihung Lung) is a widowed chef, living in Taipei with his three daughters, each of whom is getting itchy for the world beyond. (Watch out for the exquisite Chien-Lien Wu as Jia-Chien, the pushiest of the three.) Mr. Chu is a King Lear of the kitchen: a master on his own ground, slapping fish around and blowing air into a boiled duck, but gradually losing his sense of taste and his power to rule. The movie is more likable than memorable; you come out running for the nearest restaurant. In Mandarin.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center and Plaza.)

Ed Wood—Tim Burton's biography of the filmmaker who inflicted "Plan 9 from Outer Space" and "Glen or Glenda" on fifties moviegoers tries to persuade us that its hero is a sort of holy fool of cinema. The picture is superbly shot, in black-and-white, by Stefan Czapsky, and most of the actors—Bill

Murray, Sarah Jessica Parker, Jeffrey Jones, and Martin Landau (as Bela Lugosi)—are engaging. But there's a strong whiff of pointlessness to the whole enterprise. Wood (played by Johnny Depp) is depicted as a wide-eyed, boyish innocent, and he simply isn't interesting enough to hold our full attention for two hours.—T.R. (10/3/94) (Village East Cinemas and Sutton.)

L'Enfer—Claude Chabrol has returned to the sunny provincial horrors of "Le Boucher." Paul (François Cluzet) is a successful hotelier, who marries Nelly (Emmanuelle Béart) and can't quite believe that she is faithful to him. Chabrol hauls us slowly through the stages of Paul's mad jealousy, from mild suspicion to a final, untethered hysteria. The weak link in the picture is Cluzet, who seems feeble and plaintive; you wouldn't blame Béart (whose beauty really is maddening) if she *did* start playing around. Chabrol adapted the story from an old screenplay by Henri-Georges Clouzot (the director of "Diabolique"), and added his own brand of casual foreboding. Who else could find such menace in the sound of jets crossing a peaceful summer sky? In French.—A.L. (Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

Floundering—James LeGros is unemployed, his brother is a drug addict, and his girlfriend is cheating on him in this black comedy about being down and out in Venice, California. With John Cusack, Ethan Hawke, Lisa Zane, and Steve Buscemi. Written and directed by Peter McCarthy. (Quad Cinema.)

Forrest Gump—As all the world now knows, Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, a simple Alabama soul who serves his country without hurting a fly; he saves his comrades in Vietnam, woos the dippy Jenny (Robin Wright), and runs back and forth across the continent. Hanks does his best to convince us that Gump is, in fact, a character, and not merely a bulging sack of virtues, but the movie takes the fight out of him. With Sally Field and Gary Sinise. Directed by Robert Zemeckis.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 34th St. East, and 59th Street East Cinema.)

Hoop Dreams—This engrossing documentary tells the stories of two inner-city Chicago teen-agers, William Gates and Arthur Agee, who aspire to careers in professional basketball. The filmmakers—Steve James, Frederick Marx, and Peter Gilbert—follow them all the way through high school. In the course of the movie's patient, sympathetic narrative (the running time is close to three hours), our reaction to the heroes' progress changes decisively, and for the better: at first we're assessing their chances, measuring them for N.B.A. uniforms; by the end we're rooting for them simply to survive the process without losing all their exuberance and drive and creative spirit.—T.R. (10/17/94) (Eastside Playhouse, Film Forum, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

I Don't Want to Talk About It—Luisina Brando plays a rich widow in a Latin-American village who refuses to acknowledge the vertically challenged condition of her dwarf daughter (Alejandra Podesta); Marcello Mastroianni is the dashing new man in town who improbably falls for and marries the girl. The erotic whimsy and small-town humor don't congeal, and the deus-ex-circus ending is an insult. It's a one-joke movie with a lousy punch line. Maria Luisa Bemberg directed. In Spanish.—M.S. (57th St. Playhouse.)

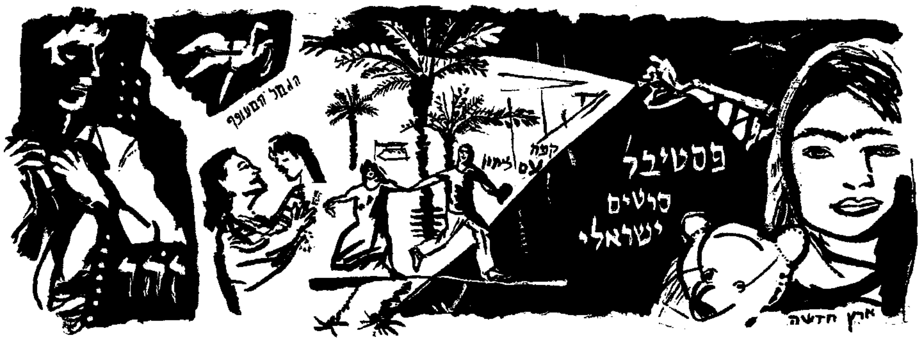
I Like It Like That—It's macha versus macho in the Bronx, as a young mother of three (Lauren Vélez) takes an assistant's job at a record company to bail her husband (Jon Seda) out of jail, only to rouse gossip and jealousy in the barrio. Darnell Martin's enjoyably brash début movie has originality and feeling beneath the look-at-me theatrics. It's about the comedy and pathos of people taking on more responsibility than they can handle; the best moments come when the characters (and Martin) catch their breath and crack some jokes. There's riotous sexual vaudeville provided by Vélez and Seda. With Jesse Borrego, Lisa Vidal, and Griffin Dunne.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

The Last Seduction—A star turn from Linda Fiorentino as Bridget, a woman with a frozen wasteland where her moral landscape should be. In New York, she cheats her husband (Bill Pullman) out of their illegal earnings; upstate, she cheats Mike (Peter Berg) out of everything but his life. The movie has a hard forties snap to it—lust is a weapon and love is a letdown. Directed by John Dahl ("Red Rock West").—A.L. (10/24/94) (Village Theatre VII and Paris.)

Love Affair—Glenn Gordon Caron's movie is the second remake of Leo McCarey's 1939 romantic weeper (same title), which starred Charles Boyer and Irene Dunne; in 1957, McCarey filmed it again, as "An Affair to Remember," with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. In the latest version, Warren Beatty and Annette Bening do their best to simulate the charismatic swooning and mooning of their predecessors, but they don't bring a lot of conviction to their roles. No reason, really, why they should: this was cheesy, contrived material in 1939 and in 1957, and it still is. Everyone involved in this picture seems overqualified, from the writers (Robert Towne, with Beatty) to the cinematographer (Conrad Hall) to the production designer (the late Ferdinando Scarfiotti) to the large, pointlessly high-powered supporting cast (headed by Katharine Hepburn). There's an air of slumming about the whole enterprise, which kind of undercuts the romantic mood. The earth does not move. Also with Garry Shandling, Kate Capshaw, Pierce Brosnan, Chloe Webb, and Harold Ramis.—T.R. (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Columbus Circle.)

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein—Kenneth Branagh directed and stars as Dr. Frankenstein, with Robert De Niro as the creature. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Oleanna—David Mamet directed this adaptation of his 1992 play about a college professor who is accused of sexual harassment by a student. With William H. Macy and Debra Eisenstadt. (Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



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EINAT PELED

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CURRENT FILMS—Cont'd

Only You—Moonbeams don't strike twice for Norman Jewison. The director pulls together elements from "Roman Holiday," "Summertime," and "Cinderella," as well as his own "Moonstruck," and comes up with a negligible comedy about a jittery bride-to-be (Marisa Tomei) who jets from Pittsburgh to Italy in search of the true love prophesied by a Ouija board and a fortune-teller. Robert Downey, Jr., plays the American in Rome who may be her one and only. Diane Drake's script doesn't provide the memorable romantic interplay that would help an audience share Tomei's fantasy. The supporting cast (Bonnie Hunt, Fisher Stevens, and Joaquim De Almeida) fares better, as does cinematographer Sven Nykvist, who gets to shoot Venice, Rome, and Positano.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Criterion Center.)

Pulp Fiction—In Quentin Tarantino's new picture, John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Harvey Keitel, Christopher Walken, and Bruce Willis parade through two and a half hours of complicated, cross-weaving Los Angeles plots, some of which are more gripping than others; the talk is dirty and funny, the violence always waiting just around the corner. It's a bright and startling picture, but the next day, it seems like a dream: the film attacks your senses and gives you almost nothing to remember it by, let alone to nourish you. It had to happen, and Tarantino is the man to deliver it: cinema as fast food.—A.L. (10/10/94) (Angelika Film Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, and Embassy.)

Quiz Show—Robert Redford's movie is a speedy, absorbing chronicle of a trivial show-business scandal of the fifties: the rigging of big-money quiz shows. The screenplay, by Paul Attanasio, tries hard to sell some sweeping ideas about the class dynamics of American society, and doesn't quite succeed. The picture's real strength is its witty, vigorous evocation of the fifties media world. It hums along like a well-constructed farce, and its crazy momentum carries it over the bumps of social significance. Ralph Fiennes, John Turturro, and Rob Morrow have the largest roles, but they're outshone by the supporting players: Paul Scofield, Mira Sorvino, Christopher McDonald, Allan Rich, Hank Azaria, Barry Levinson, and—best of all—David Paymer.—T.R. (9/19/94) (Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Quad Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

The River Wild—A family led by plucky supermom Meryl Streep goes on a white-water-rafting vacation out West and gets a hairier trip than it bargained for when the raft is hijacked by a pair of desperate crooks. The audience, however, gets precisely what *it* bargained for: safe, predictable thrills, with a light spray of dysfunctional-family drama. Curtis Hanson's direction is expert, but the screenplay, by Denis O'Neill, is so formulaic that the picture is never more than moderately exciting; you can see around every bend in this river. Also with Kevin Bacon, David Strathairn, Joseph Mazzello, and John C. Reilly.—T.R. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Ziegfeld; through Nov. 10.)

The Road to Wellville—A farce about American health mania at the turn of the century, set in and around the Battle Creek, Michigan, spa of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (Anthony Hopkins). The writer-director, Alan Parker, displays comic zeal only in his handling of the set design and props, such as Kellogg's enema apparatus. Hopkins, with buck teeth and facial fur, resembles a rabid beaver and chews the screen accordingly. Matthew Broderick, as a patient, parades around in regulation loincloths that give him the look of a New Year's cherub; he regains his aplomb when he renounces the spa and dons civilian clothes for good. The beleaguered cast also includes John Cusack, Dana Carvey, Lara Flynn Boyle, and Bridget Fonda (as Broderick's wife). Based on the novel by T. Coraghessan Boyle.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Baronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Robert A. Heinlein's The Puppet Masters—Donald Sutherland stars as a desperate scientist in this thriller, based on Heinlein's science-fiction novel, about alien parasites who control the minds of their human hosts. With Eric Thal and Julie Warner. Written by David Goyer, Ted Elliott, and Terry Rossio. Directed by Stuart Orme. (Village East Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Embassy; through Nov. 10.)

The Shawshank Redemption—Tim Robbins returns to his best form with his haunted, cunning portrayal of Andy Dufresne, a young banker sentenced to life imprisonment in the nineteen-forties. Frank Darabont's movie never grabs at you, preferring to work patiently on your sympathies and nerves while finding time for casual jokes. What at first seems like a plotless tale of companion-

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CHANNEL SURFING

Young and Mopey

NEARLY every television season has its Noble Lost Cause—a series that is adored by critics, spurned by viewers, and shunted around the prime-time schedule like a derelict rousted from park bench to park bench. For the press, the show's ratings become a referendum on whether the public will support "quality programming." This season's sick kitten is "My So-Called Life" (ABC, Thursdays), an adolescent drama photographed like a Clearasil commercial set in the High School of Lost Souls. None of the teen-agers here smile with any teeth—their faces are swamped from the effort of sorting out their feelings.

"My So-Called Life" has been created by the team that did "thirtysomething," and like that moody exercise in poignancy and ennui, it seems to be taking place in an aquarium where past and present, fantasy and reality, share the same muddied dishwater. As a hilariously solemn article in the *Times* Arts & Leisure section recently explained, the show uses an unreliable narrator. ("The device is as old as Chaucer; prominent examples include Henry Fielding's Tom Jones and much of Dickens." Reading is so educational.) Claire Danes stars as Angela; it's her so-called life, and her deliberately awkward voice-overs ("School is a battlefield for your heart") sound like diary entries filtered through an adult consciousness intent on making a point.

Some critics cite Danes' expressionless manner as evidence of her refusal to court favor with the camera. Hers, they say, is an authentic teen-age pout. But her eyes lack inquiry, and the show itself is so arch and fanciful, and layered with so many levels of low-morale self-consciousness, that it has none of the hormonal lift of adolescence. It already seems to be prescribing itself Prozac.

One show that hasn't gotten its critical due is "Ellen" (ABC, Wednesdays). Its star, the standup comic Ellen DeGeneres, has been accused of exercising muscle—after her sitcom's first season, some characters disappeared, and the title went from "These Friends of Mine" to the ego-trippy "Ellen" (with its echo of "Roseanne"). But it paid off: the writing is better, DeGeneres is more relaxed, and the show has become a dependable pleasure.

—James Wolcott

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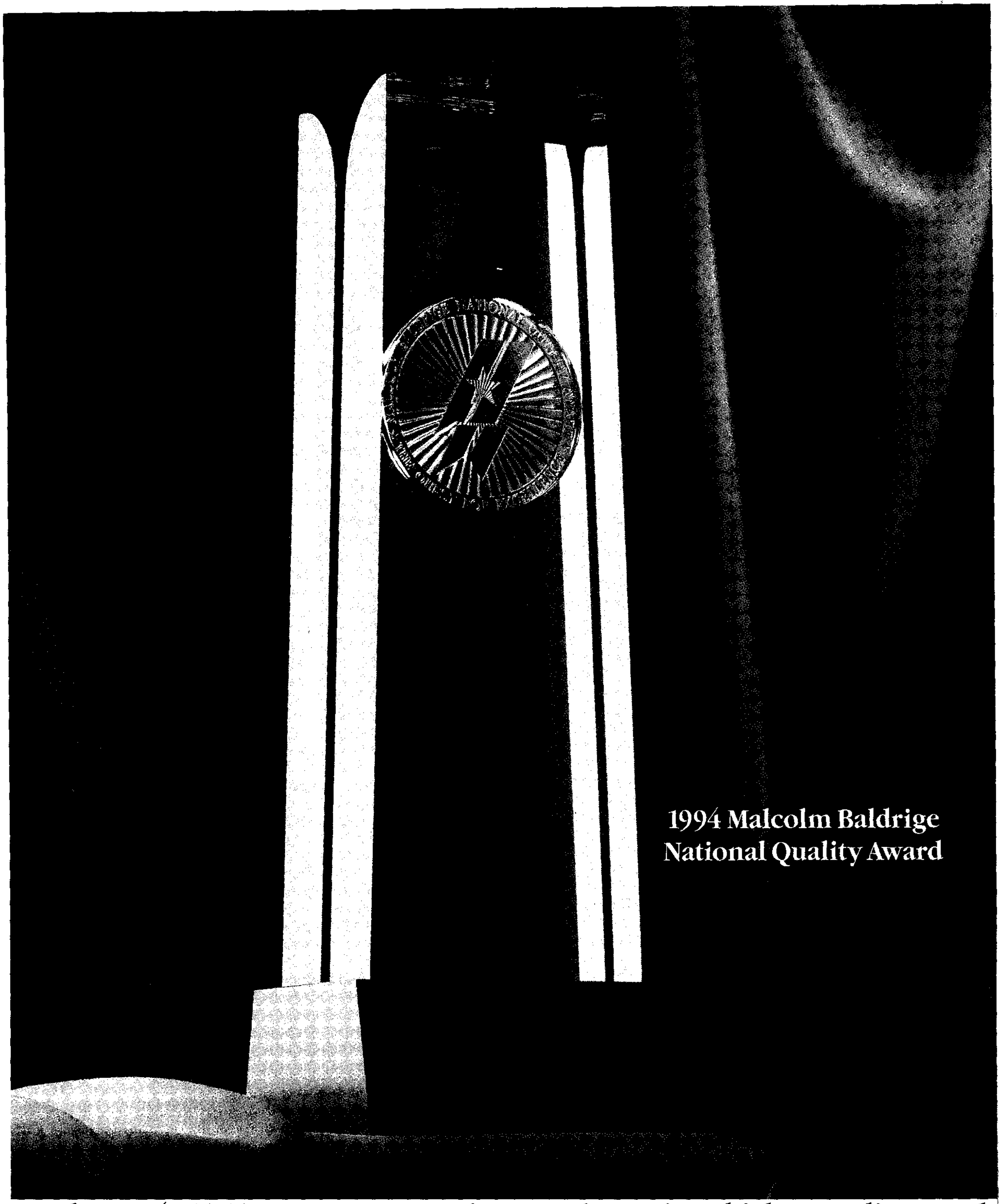

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ship—principally between Andy and a fixer named Red (Morgan Freeman)—tightens into excitement. The picture stays on track and leaves you, appropriately enough, with a surging sense of release.—A.L. (9/26/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Silent Fall—A nine-year-old autistic boy who witnesses the murder of his parents is treated as a savant superhero in this tasteless, slipshod thriller, written by Akiva Goldsman and directed by Bruce Beresford. After rival psychologists Richard Dreyfuss and John Lithgow prod the child to recover his memory of the event, he reveals not just total recall, but also the power of note-perfect mimicry. The movie is supposed to hinge on the duelling therapies of humane, non-toxic Dreyfuss and imperious, prescription-happy Lithgow, but it

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st (247-5070).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

turns out to be the story of a cryptic superboy and his nubile, overprotective sister (Liv Tyler). Maybe Goldsman's bent for juvenile heroes will prove more apt in his next script, "Batman Forever." With Linda Hamilton.—M.S. (Village East Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

The Specialist—Cheesecake meets beefcake as Sharon Stone persuades an ex-C.I.A. explosives ace (Sylvester Stallone) to wreak vengeance on Miami mobsters. Stallone's archenemy (James Woods, of course) heads security for these Cuban bad guys (led by Eric Roberts and Rod Steiger). The screenwriter, Alexandra Seros, gives every character a wit impediment. Steiger's accent prompts nervous laughter: "You bastard!" comes out "Jew bastard!" Luis Llosa directed.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

StarGate—Elementary sci-fi about a hieroglyphics expert (James Spader) and a U.S. military squad (led by Kurt Russell) who zip to a distant planet via the title portal, last used in ancient Egypt. They discover that Ra (Jaye Davidson of "The Crying Game"), the sun god of the Pharaohs, is alive and well and a vicious alien. Russell's pointed understatement, Spader's fuzzy comedy stylings, and a few dandy props and designs can't elevate this matinée fodder above the level of George Pal's "Atlantis, the Lost Continent." The intended audience seems to be ten-year-olds; Davidson is like a camp Disney witch. Directed by Roland Emmerich.—M.S. (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Vanya on 42nd Street—Louis Malle's astonishingly beautiful film documents a stage production, directed by André Gregory, of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya." The conceit is that the actors—wearing street clothes and clutching take-out coffee—have gathered for a run-through of the play; as the performance goes along, our sense of the theatrical reality gives way to the more intimate feeling of belief that movies create. The picture is, among other things, a splendid demonstration of how great art seduces us, has its way with us. It's designed to give the audience the experience of total surrender to theatrical illusion, and Malle and Gregory and the actors—especially Wallace Shawn, as Vanya, and Julianne Moore, as Yelena—earn their victory honestly. The style of the movie seems, finally, to merge with the play itself: nothing appears to be happening, yet everything is transformed. Also with Brooke Smith, Larry Pines, and George Gaynes. The superb adaptation is by David Mamet.—T.R. (10/31/94) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The War—In a small town in Mississippi during the early seventies, a young brother and sister (Elijah Wood and Lexi Randall) build a tree-house refuge and defend it against the other kids in the neighborhood. Kevin Costner is their father, who has recently returned from Vietnam, and Mare Winningham is their mother. Directed by Jon Avnet. (Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

Wes Craven's New Nightmare—Or, "Freddy Does Deconstruction." Although the "Nightmare on Elm Street" series officially ended three years ago, the conceit here is that Freddy Krueger refuses to be stopped—not even when he hits the "fourth wall." The only way to keep him from entering the real world is to trap him in another "Nightmare" movie—this one. Heather Langenkamp (of the first and third films), now the mother of a young son (Miko Hughes), gets pulled back into the horror. Craven brews potent paranoia out of earthquake scares, parental fears of media violence, and gory special-effects sprees—but only for a while. With Robert Englund and John Saxon.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Sutton, and Criterion Center.)

REVIVALS

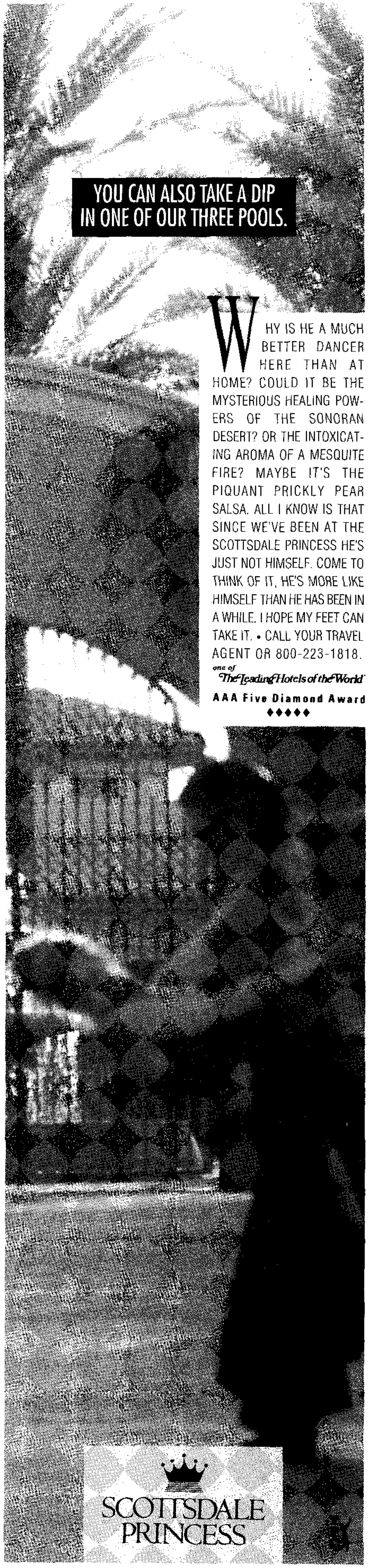
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the film-library listings following these notes.)

Alice's Restaurant (1969)—Although a number of its anti-establishment routines seemed smug and familiar even at the time, Arthur Penn's movie about folksinger Arlo Guthrie's free-wheeling youth (based partly on Guthrie's eighteen-minute-long fluke hit, "The Alice's Restaurant Massacree") achieves an emotional complexity rare in youth movies of any era. Many directors exploited the friction between the counterculture and the culture, but Penn also explored the gaps between hippies and their older sympathizers—especially between Arlo's pals and Alice and Ray Brock (Pat Quinn and James Broderick), who transform a deconsecrated church in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, into a nonconformist enclave. For every terrible idea there's a good one: the final prolonged shot of Quinn standing alone in her wedding gown outside the church is daring, suggestive, and inspired. Penn and Venable Herndon wrote the script; Dede Allen edited.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Nov. 13.)

La Bête Humaine (1938)—Jean Renoir's version of the Zola novel, transferred from the Second Empire to the thirties, has a memorable beginning, with Jean Gabin driving the express on the run from Le Havre to Paris. The train sequences, which are superb—realistic yet poetic—were shot on location and include views of the Gare St. Lazare in Paris in 1938. The film has marvellous atmosphere and a fine cast (Simone Simon, Carette, Fernand Ledoux, Blanchette Brunoy, Renoir himself), but the material, which involves brutal, uncontrollable passion seen in a social framework, turns oppressive, and at times Gabin is a lump. In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 12 and 14.)

Beyond the Forest (1949)—Consistently (though inadvertently) hilarious; there's not a sane dull scene in this peerless piece of camp. This is the melodrama in which Bette Davis tosses her black wig and snarls the line "What a dump!"—which Edward Albee took for the opening of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" An evil Emma Bovary, she's a sloven married to a Midwestern doctor (Joseph Cotten); she treats him abominably, and every time she has a chance, she surrenders herself with hysterical enthusiasm to the hot-eyed embraces of a Chicago magnate (David Brian). Her obsession is to blow town, join her lover, and be a fancy kept woman; she nearly obsesses the soundtrack with variations of "Chicago, Chicago." The director, King Vidor, seems to be inventing his own brand of hog-wild Expressionism; covered with droplets of erotic sweat, Davis shakes her ample hips, kills an old man (Minor Watson), plunges down a mountainside to end an unwanted pregnancy, and dies within sight of a choo-choo pulling out for Chicago, Chicago. Max Steiner's music cues her every stormy mood.—P.K. (A Different Light Bookstore; Nov. 13.)

Comic Book Confidential (1989)—This documentary by the Canadian filmmaker Ron Mann begins promisingly, with a brisk, hilarious survey of the early days of comic books: the innocent thirties, the superhero-dominated forties, and the bizarre fifties, when comics were widely viewed as a noxious influence on young minds and the publishers started to censor themselves. But when Mann hits the sixties the pace slackens; the movie begins to make its case for the importance of the art form, and it takes on the ponderous rhythm of an introductory textbook. One by one, the artists are paraded before us, from the counterculture wild men of "Zap Comix" to the brooding avant-gardists of "Raw," and each is given a brief, uncritical profile. There are, however, funny segments devoted to Lynda Barry and Harvey Pekar.—T.R. (Donnell Library Center; Nov. 10.)



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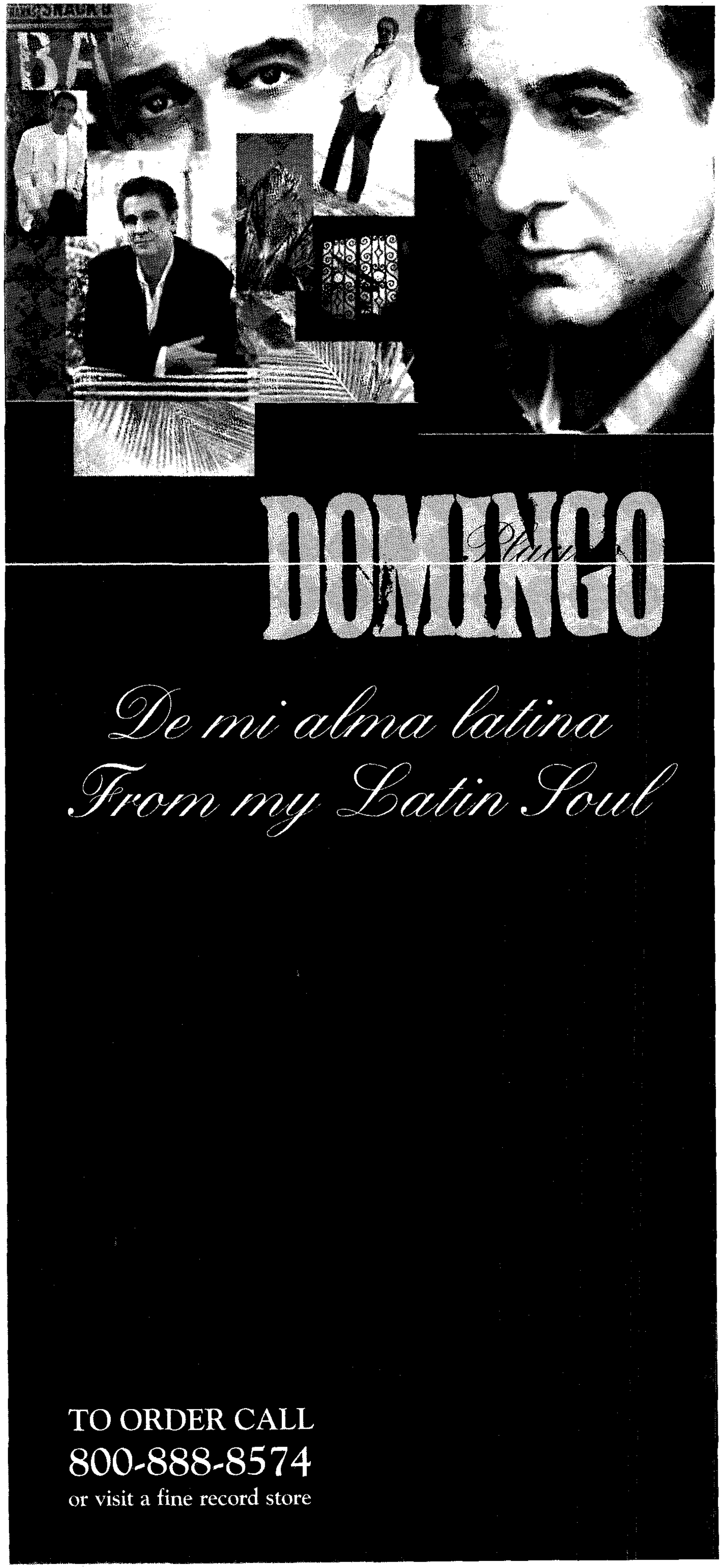

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REVIVALS—Cont'd

To Sleep with Anger (1990)—A domestic comedy with an unusually dense texture. It's shot straightforwardly, in a style that appears realistic almost to the point of banality, and yet right from the start there's something unsettling about its plainness: Charles Burnett, who wrote and directed, keeps hinting that things are not necessarily what they seem. Gideon (Paul Butler) and Suzie (Mary Alice) are a middle-aged black couple who live in Los Angeles; their roots, however, are in the rural South. When a friend of theirs from back home appears on their doorstep, they invite him to stay with them for a while, and he does. This unexpected guest, Harry (Danny Glover), turns out to be a gifted confidence man, with a sharp eye for human weakness: he's a grinning, honey-tongued demon. The presence of Harry gives the realistic surface of the movie a vibrant strangeness. He seems to transform everything that happens in these clean, comfortable living rooms and kitchens into dark rituals performed in the woods in the dead of night.—T.R. (Whitney Museum; Nov. 12.)

A Very Private Affair (1962)—Brigitte Bardot as a spoiled, bratty sex kitten who floats from modelling into movies, becomes a great star, takes innumerable lovers, finds fame and a multiplicity of beds equally unrewarding, and becomes suicidal. The director, Louis Malle, provides prankish, lively moments, though the story, with its many parallels to Bardot's own life, produces a sense of discomfort. It's one of the least interesting of Malle's films: he seems to be trying to show what's under a star's myth, but we don't experience the myth—only the shallowness underneath. In French.—P.K. (Symphony Space; Nov. 15.)

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St. (586-1900)—The 11th Annual Israel Film Festival. Nov. 9 and 12 at 7:30: "The Distance" (Dan Wolman). . . . Nov. 9, 12, and 15 at 10: "Max & Morris" (Jacob Goldwasser). . . . Nov. 10 at 5:30: "The Workmaker" (Eli Cohen). . . . Nov. 10 at 7:45 and Nov. 13 at 9:30: "Imagined Autobiography" (Michal Bat-Adam). . . . Nov. 10 at 10: "In the Name of Love" (Idit Shechori). . . . Nov. 12 at 5:30 and Nov. 14 at 10: "Coffee with Lemon" (Leonid Gorovets). . . . Nov. 12 at midnight: "The Revenge of Itzik Finklestein" (Enrique Rottenberg). . . . Nov. 13 at 1: "The Hunt for Adolf Eichmann" (Dan Setton). . . . Nov. 13 at 3: "Altalena" (Ilana Tsur). . . . Nov. 13 at 5 and Nov. 14 at 7:45: "Newland" (Orna Ben-Dor Niv). . . . Nov. 13 at 7:30: "The Flying Camel" (Rami Na'aman). . . . Nov. 14 at 3: "Daddy Come to the Fair" (Nitsa Gonen). . . . Nov. 14 at 5:30: "Flower in My Garden" (Shiri Shahar). . . . Nov. 15 at 3: A program of short films. . . . Nov. 15 at 7:45: "Zohar" (Eran Riklis).

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—"Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb" (1964, Stanley Kubrick).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-1717)—Through Nov. 10: "Llanto por un Bandido" (1963, Carlos Saura; in Spanish) and "Nueve Cartas a Berta" (1965, Basilio Martín Patino; in Spanish). . . . ¶ From Nov. 11: A program of new Italian films.

New School for Social Research, Tishman Auditorium, 66 W. 12th St. (505-7742)—The finalists of the 28th Annual New York Expo of Short Film and Video will be shown starting at 6:30 on Nov. 11 and at noon on Nov. 12.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films directed by Jean Renoir. Nov. 10 at 2:30: "The River" (1951). . . . Nov. 10 at 6: "Madame Bovary" (1933). . . . Nov. 10 at 8:15 and Nov. 13 at 2: "Eléna et les Hommes" (1956). . . . Nov. 11 at 2:30 and Nov. 13 at 5: "The Elusive Corporal" (1962). . . . Nov. 11 at 6 and Nov. 12 at 2: "The Crime of Monsieur Lange" (1935). . . . Nov.

11 at 8: "On Purgè Bébé" (1931). . . . Nov. 12 at 5 and Nov. 14 at 2:30: "La Bête Humaine" (†). . . . Nov. 14 at 6 and Nov. 15 at 2:30: "Swamp Water" (1941). . . . Nov. 15 at 6: "The Testament of Doctor Cordelier" (1959). . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 3 and 6: "The Yavapai Story" (1992, Kathy Fredricks). . . . ¶ A program of silent films by the Russian director Evgenii Bauer. Nov. 11 at 3: "Silent Witnesses" (1914) and "Children of the Age" (1916). . . . Nov. 11 at 6: "First Love" (1915) and "The Happiness of Eternal Night" (1915). . . . Nov. 11 at 8: "The Lady Killer" (1915) and "Yurii Nagornyi" (1916). . . . Nov. 12 at 3: "Glory to Us, Death to the Enemy" (1914) and "The Revolutionary" (1917). . . . Nov. 12 at 5: "The Twilight of a Woman's Soul" (1913) and "Daydreams" (1915). . . . Nov. 13 at 3: "After Death" (1915) and "Nelly Raintseva" (1916). . . . Nov. 13 at 5: "The Dying Swan" (1917) and "For Luck" (1917). . . . Nov. 14 at 3: "The Alarm" (1917).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Nov. 9 at 2, 4, 6, and 8 and Nov. 10 at 2, 4, and 8:30: "The Devil, Probably" (1977, Robert Bresson; in French). . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 6: "Rhythm Thief" (1994, Matthew Harrison). . . . ¶ From Nov. 11: A program of films from Germany, 1933-45. . . . ¶ Nov. 13 at 2: "Ebb Tide" (1937, James Hogan).

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A program of films and videos by or about black American males. Nov. 10 at 2: "Dutchman" (1967, Anthony Harvey) and "The Session" (1990, David Johnson). . . . Nov. 10 at 5:30: "Leadbelly" (1976, Gordon Parks). . . . Nov. 11 at noon: "Jack Johnson" (1970, Jim Jacobs) and "Eyes on the Prize, Part II: Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More, 1964-72" (1990). . . . Nov. 11 at 3:30: "Black and Tan" (1929, Dudley Murphy) and "The Cotton Club" (1984, Francis Ford Coppola). . . . Nov. 12 at noon: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (1984, Robert Geller). . . . Nov. 12 at 3:30: "To Sleep with Anger" (†). . . . Nov. 13 at noon: "Chameleon Street" (1990, Wendell B. Harris, Jr.) . . . Nov. 13 at 3:30: "Ganja and Hess" (1970, Bill Gunn).

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Nov. 13 at 7, the feature will be "Beyond the Forest" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Nov. 15 at 12:30 and 6: "The Diary of a Chambermaid" (1945, Jean Renoir). . . . Nov. 15 at 3:15 and 8:45: "The Woman on the Beach" (1947, Renoir).

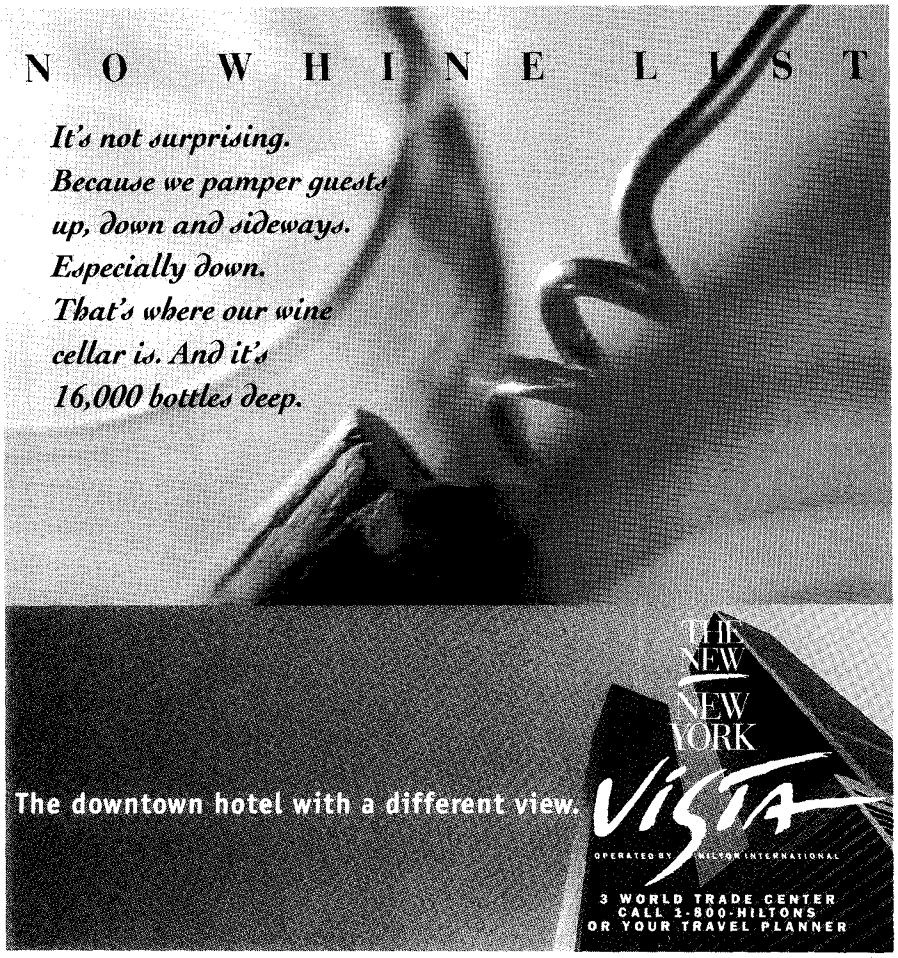
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films by Arthur Penn. Nov. 12 at 2: "The Miracle Worker" (1962). . . . Nov. 12 at 4: "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967). Mr. Penn will be present to discuss his films. . . . Nov. 13 at 2: "Alice's Restaurant" (†). . . . Nov. 13 at 4:30: "Little Big Man" (1970).

SYMPHONY SPACE, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—Nov. 15 at 7 and 9:15: "A Very Private Affair" (†).

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—Nov. 4 at 6:30: "Sonatine" (1993, Takeshi Kitano; in Japanese).

DONNELL LIBRARY CENTER, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Nov. 10 at 2:30: "Comic Book Confidential" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 15 at noon: "Le Bonheur" (1965, Agnès Varda; in French).

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—Opening events of "Reel-to-Reel Harmony: Great Classical Voices on Film," a five-week-long series of films (both full-length and extracts) that feature operatic luminaries of the past. Nov. 10 at 7: A grab bag that includes early experiments in sound synchronization (with tenor Giovanni Martinelli), Leontyne Price portraying Aida, Renata Tebaldi performing excerpts from "La Bohème" (with Jussi Bjørling) and "Tosca" (with George London), and Nelson Eddy singing the voice-overs for Disney's 1946 film "Willy the Operatic Whale.". . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 2: Maria Callas in "Medea" (1969, Pier Paolo Pasolini). . . . ¶ Nov. 13 at 2: Lily Pons in "Hitting a New High" (1937, Raoul Walsh).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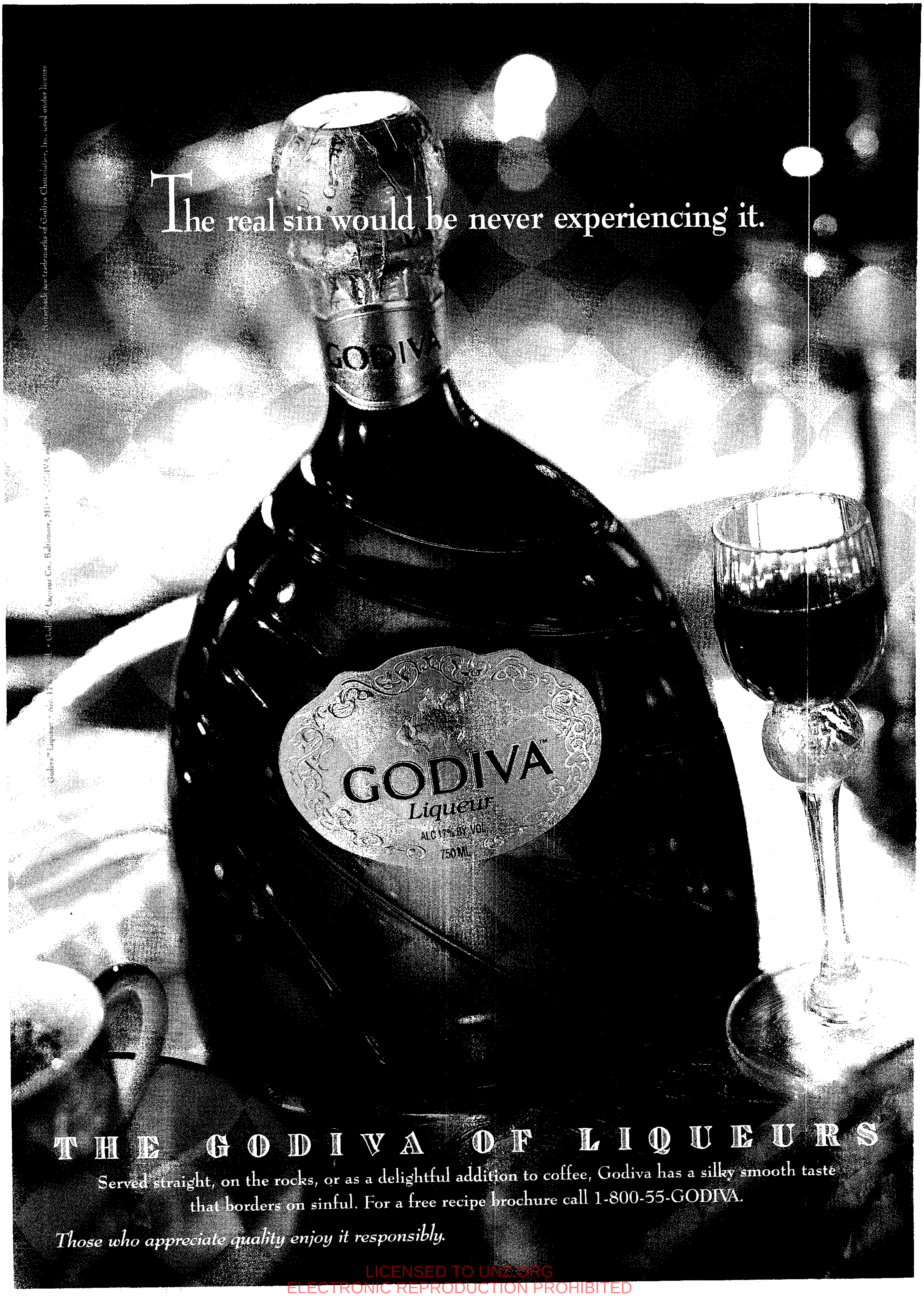

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

UNIVERSAL CARE

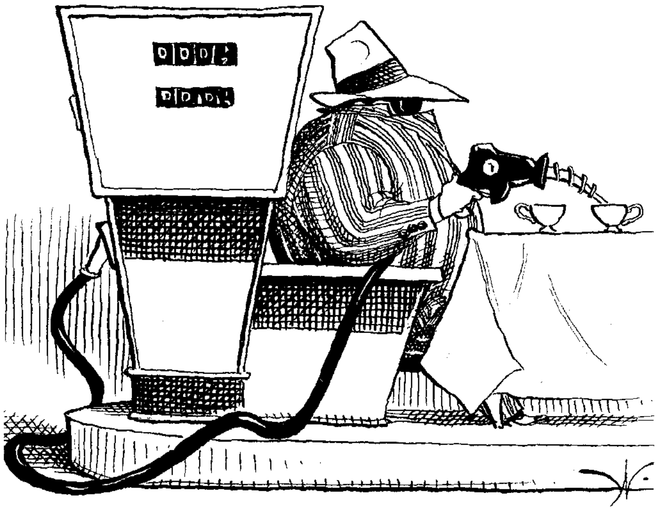
THERE are fixed ways to react to the outrages of the current election season as it unfurls on C-SPAN: intestinal fury, unblinking fascination, and, finally, while waiting to get into the voting booth, the person ahead of you struggling endlessly with the flippers and the curtain handle, a kind of serene resignation. This, too, shall pass, a few years—the blink of an eye—hence. But how to react to the other, infinitely more consequential news story of the season? What does it mean that cosmologists are now saying that the universe may be no more than eight billion years old? The figure used to run as high as twenty billion. It's as if they were *shaving* twelve billion years off existence itself.

When it comes to this kind of story, we are usually in the graceful hands of John Noble Wilford, the *Times* science reporter and village explainer, who is most often charged with providing the metaphors and thumbnail descriptions that will make comprehensible the secrets of the universe to an I.R.T. commuter trying to concentrate even as the conductor is announcing "a small fire situation" on the downtown track. Ordinarily, the Science section of the *Times* is dealing with a *somewhat* altered theory, a *somewhat* more dire prediction of, say, asteroid collision. But now the facts are too strange for ready explanation. It turns out that some stars, thought to be sixteen billion years old, predate the universe itself. How? Astrophysicists who had based much of their Big Bang thinking on exotic particles known as WIMPs—about which don't ask, except to say that they're invisible but very big—now concede that WIMPs are still, well, theoretical. Why? Meanwhile, we're left feeling a little like the depressed Alvy Singer-as-a-child character in "Annie Hall," who tells the elders of Coney Island that they are doomed, because the universe is expanding. "What is that your business? . . . You're here in Brooklyn, Brooklyn is not expanding!" Alvy's mother shrieks, and the whole borough vibrates. The *Times*, however, is more sanguine when it comes to our knowledge of the origins and future of the universe. As Noble Wilford (the perfect name!) puts it: "The tinkering continues."

ON THE LAM WITH AN ÜBER-MOBSTER

A LOT of people would like to get their hands on Lawrence Salvatore Iorizzo. At fifty-six, he is considered one of the most brilliant white-collar criminals in America: he was the undisputed king of the bootleg-gasoline racket, who during the early eighties made hundreds of millions of dollars for the mob and tens of millions for himself. In 1984, facing a long prison term, Iorizzo became a government informant, testified against a number of his organized-crime partners, and went into the federal witness-protection program—only to be booted out in 1987, allegedly for making a trip without authorization. A few years ago, he had to flee a hideout in Oklahoma City because of a Mafia contract on his life; now he is wanted in Texas on charges of fraud. Under the circumstances, therefore, it was rather a surprise when, on a recent afternoon, he sat down in the bar of a hotel lobby for a chat.

Iorizzo settled into a booth by the window and ordered a double espresso. He is about six feet tall, with a handsome face—he has hazel eyes, a bashful smile, and wavy brown hair—and a tremendous body, which a prison doctor once estimated at five hundred and fifty pounds. It was said that he could eat nine pizzas at a sitting, but now he carries around an attaché case full of weight-loss pills. "I've been dieting," he says. "I think now I'm in the four-hundred-pound range." All the same, how does a man of his size hide from the mob and the F.B.I.? Iorizzo takes a sip of espresso, and frowns. "It would be suicide for me to say anything about that," he says. "In my position, you just do what you gotta do."



The case against Iorizzo in Texas is based on charges of failure to pay gasoline taxes and conspiracy to commit theft, but he maintains that the charges

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL WITTE

are "trumped up." He seems genuinely offended that the F.B.I., to whom he provided such valuable assistance as an informant, is now hunting him down. The real problem, he thinks, is that the Justice Department suspects him of drug trafficking. "There are people in Washington who actually believe that Larry Iorizzo has been out there putting together drug deals," he says, shaking his head. "They can't believe I make the kind of money I do without being in narcotics." Well, he says, they're wrong. "I can make the same money in gasoline, in diesel, that any of these animals make in drugs."

NOTHING in Iorizzo's outsize and outlandish life has been normal—including his childhood. He was born in Hell's Kitchen and grew up in Queens. His father was a jazz musician and a small-time mafioso; according to his prison medical report, his mother twice attempted suicide; his brother was a quadriplegic. By the time Larry was fifteen, his father had enlisted him to hijack trucks. "I didn't even have a driver's license yet, and my old man is calling me in the middle of the night for me to run out and steal a truck and get it to a warehouse in East Harlem or the Bronx," he says. In the seventies, Iorizzo says, through a New York money launderer known as the Duke, he made the acquaintance of Manuel Noriega, then a lieutenant colonel in the Panamanian National Guard. Iorizzo claims that for years he and Noriega traded in black-market goods out of the Panama free zone. (The charge cannot be confirmed.) During this period, Iorizzo also kept two wives in separate houses, fifteen minutes apart, on the North Shore of Long Island, and had eight children by the two marriages. (The bigamy was finally discovered when a salesperson at a local large men's clothing store inadvertently tipped off one of the wives.)

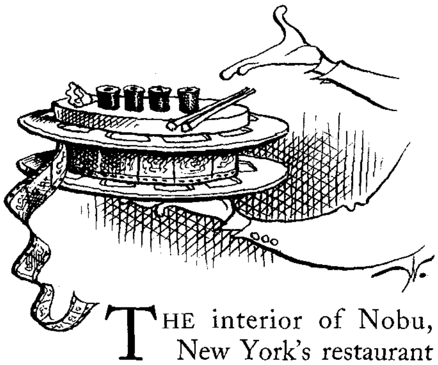
In the meantime, Iorizzo had opened a number of unbranded gas stations on Long Island. At that time, gasoline wholesalers were supposed to collect excise-tax revenues and pass them on to the state and federal governments. But Iorizzo moved the money from one dummy corporation to another, until the last company in the daisy chain invariably declared bankruptcy before paying its tax bill. Iorizzo made so much on the scheme that he was able to buy houses in Austria and Panama, both of which he would visit by leased jet, with his own chef in tow.

Before long, two wise guys from the West Coast attempted to shake him down, and he turned for help to John (Sonny) Franzese, a captain in the Colombo crime family, and to Franzese's son Michael. Sonny was a gangster's gangster, with a fearsome reputation, and, not surprisingly, the West Coast problem disappeared overnight. In 1983, at an office building in Huntington, Long Island, Iorizzo says, he presided over the Yalta Conference of bootleg gas; in attendance were representatives of the Colombo family, the Russian mob of Brighton Beach, and the Israeli mob. "We formed an alliance right there that ended up controlling about eighty-five per cent of all the unbranded discount gasoline sold in New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey," Iorizzo says.

In its first year of operation, Iorizzo estimates, the mob gasoline alliance brought in more than a billion dollars in stolen state and federal taxes. But in 1984 Iorizzo was convicted of mail and wire fraud and interstate transportation of stolen property, and the mob bosses became worried that he might not be able to hold up under the pressure. "Michael Franzese's people threatened me," Iorizzo says. "At one point, they put a gun to my son's head." (Franzese has denied this.) Iorizzo then fled to Panama City on a phony passport, and there, he claims, he was kidnapped at gunpoint by two unidentified locals and put on a plane to Miami, only to be met by agents of the F.B.I. "Then I made the biggest mistake of my life," he says. "I agreed to testify, and they promised they would protect me." The unofficial word from Justice Department sources is that Iorizzo was kicked out of the witness program because he returned to a life of crime, but, apart from that, Washington has no comment.

TODAY, Iorizzo looks tired. Perhaps only a man who has lived life to such excess could have made so many powerful enemies. He is a mobster without a mob, and a federal witness with no more trials to testify at except, perhaps, his own. "I should have just stayed in the oil business," he says. "I should have done my time and come back. I'd be in an office now, and I wouldn't have to hide from anybody." Then he swallows a handful of diet pills, packs up his attaché case, and trundles out of the bar, looking like an aging company man with no company to go to.

A FISH STORY FROM HOLLYWOOD



THE interior of Nobu, New York's restaurant of the moment, is graced by tall fake birches and tall fake blondes, and there are fashion types and record types who wait for weeks to taste the delicacies within. Movie types, on the other hand, are already familiar with the chef-proprietor's creations. Nobu is his nickname, but the restaurant that proudly bears his family name is the relatively venerable Matsuhisa, in Beverly Hills, which, despite décor that is only a few notches above corporate cafeteria, is one of Hollywood's power spots. Its success is not surprising. Since the Japanese now own vast chunks of Hollywood power, it may be reassuring to their movie-industry employees to repose in an environment where they can order Japanese people around. Besides, the food is wonderful: everyone loves Matsuhisa's squid cooked to resemble pasta, its monkfish-liver pâté topped with caviar, its Kōbe beef To-Ban. As for the waiters, they are alarmingly up to date on their customers' needs—and not just the culinary ones.

For instance, a certain young actress—let us call her Laurie Masters—has for many years been represented by a certain older and tougher I.C.M. agent—let us call her Bonnie Klein. Now a younger but even tougher and much, much hungrier agent at C.A.A.—let us call him Rob Perrillo—is wooing our Laurie Masters. In fact, he has been taking her to lunch at Matsuhisa. A lot. And now every time he gets up to go to the men's room one of the waiters hovers over Laurie and says, "Hey, look like you leaving I.C.M. pretty soon. You go with Rob Perrillo, C.A.A.?" If agent Bonnie Klein happens to show up without Laurie Masters on her arm, a waiter is likely to say to her, "Watch out. You losing Laurie. You losing Laurie." And whenever Laurie shows up alone for some New Style sashimi takeout, her favorite waiter, Oishii, yells, "Hey, Miss Masters. Rob Perrillo in today. When you gonna sign with him?"

By the time Nobu gets this hip, the waiters at Matsuhisa will probably have development deals.

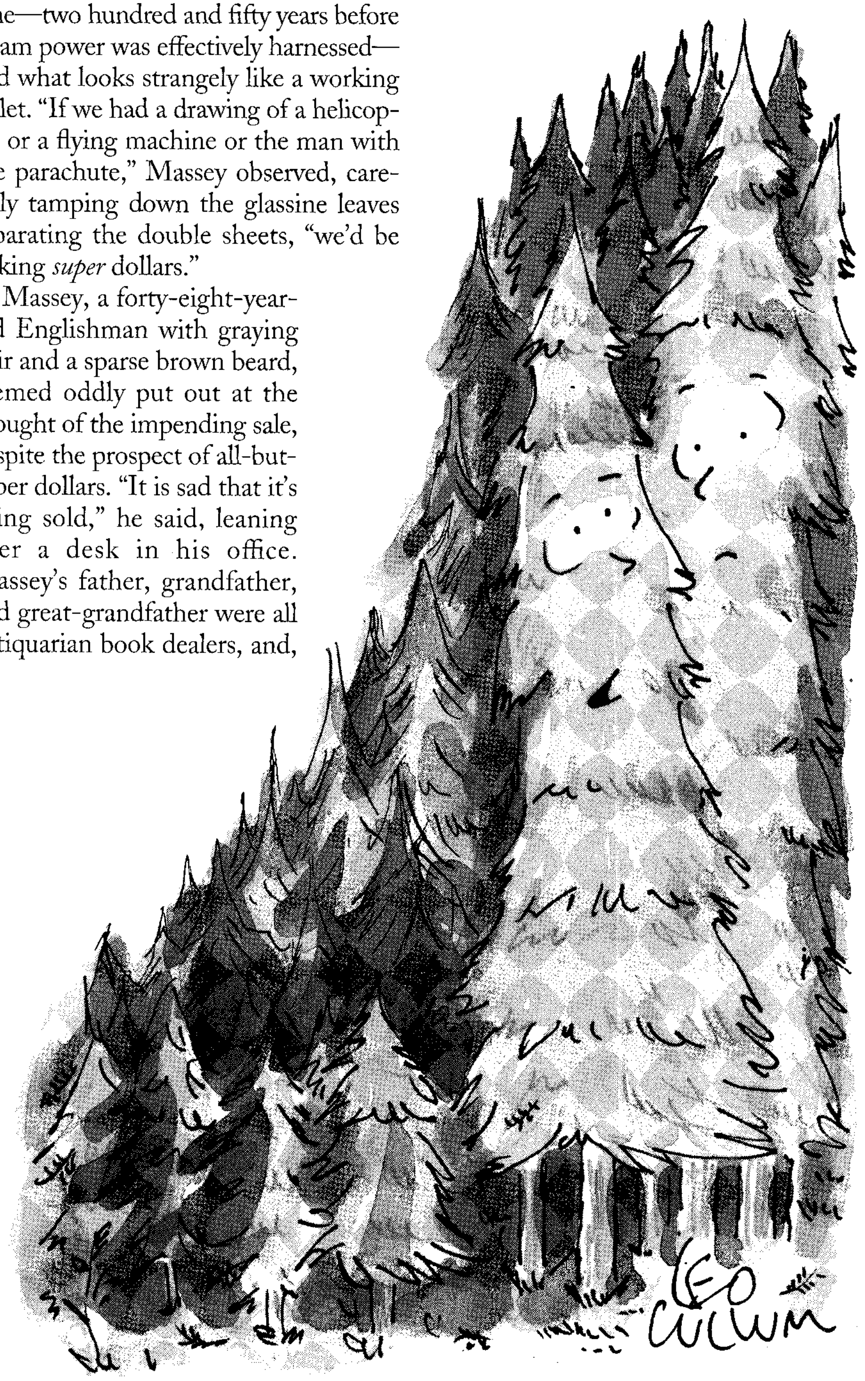
LEONARDO'S MAIN MAN AT CHRISTIE'S

"IN my field," Stephen Massey says, "ten or fifteen million dollars is a big number." Massey is the senior director of books and manuscripts at Christie's, which this Friday will be auctioning off a Leonardo da Vinci volume known as the Codex Hammer. The record for an autographed manuscript was set the last time the Codex was sold, in 1980, for the sterling equivalent of five million six hundred thousand dollars. The last time a substantial Leonardo manuscript was sold before *that* was the middle of the last century. "As far as an autographed manuscript goes," Massey said the other day, "this is about as good as you get."

The Codex Hammer, as it has been called since Armand Hammer bought it for his museum at that 1980 auction, currently sits in a locked gray trunk on a shelf near Massey's office. Before pulling it out recently, Massey washed his hands, then donned a pair of white cotton gloves. He and an assistant reached into the trunk and pulled out a stack of cardboard window mounts, each of which held a double sheet of manuscript. The Codex consists of eighteen such sheets, which had been folded in half and covered on both sides by notes and diagrams, for a total of seventy-two pages. Most of the sketches are quick and functional. The Codex is not so much a work of art as an illustrated record of the thought processes of perhaps the greatest genius who has ever lived. It's not so much a sacred object as the symbol of something sacred, like the Ten Commandments.

Leonardo was a professional engineer, and the Codex Hammer consists largely of descriptions and illustrations of his astonishing if not very glamorous observations of the properties of water—the shape of a dewdrop, the operation of a siphon, the flow of water down steps, the displacement of a stream by rocks and objects of various shapes. One page shows a drawing of a working steam engine—two hundred and fifty years before steam power was effectively harnessed—and what looks strangely like a working toilet. "If we had a drawing of a helicopter or a flying machine or the man with the parachute," Massey observed, carefully tamping down the glassine leaves separating the double sheets, "we'd be talking *super* dollars."

Massey, a forty-eight-year-old Englishman with graying hair and a sparse brown beard, seemed oddly put out at the thought of the impending sale, despite the prospect of all-but-super dollars. "It is sad that it's being sold," he said, leaning over a desk in his office. Massey's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all antiquarian book dealers, and, it turned out, he was not so much saddened by the sale as outraged by the nonchalance, the fickleness, of selling the Codex only fourteen years after it was last bought, as if it were a national treasure for a day. Massey trained a rather fierce stare out his doorway and said, "There's no feeling for keeping a great manuscript in this country. There's nothing public about the institutions over here. If they get into trouble, they're axed"—and he banged the side of his palm on the desk. "If they want to sell,



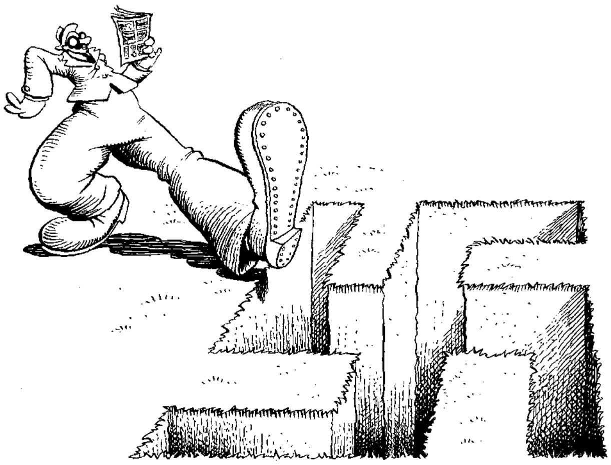
"That's the nature of a mature relationship, dear. Just because we haven't heard from Al Gore lately doesn't mean he cares any less."

they can. They can do whatever they g.d. *like* in this country." Massey looked as if he wanted to bite something.

Still, Massey sells things for a living—Christie's press release says that he has had "the distinguished pleasure" of selling two copies of the Gutenberg Bible—and he plans to smash all records with the sale of the Codex Hammer come this Friday. "I am trying," he said, "to wear both caps."

WHEN COMICS AREN'T FUNNY

R. CRUMB, who created underground comics in the sixties, parodying now familiar aspects of the (then) counterculture—hippie dropouts, bodacious babes smoking doobies and tripping out on rock musicians—and who is the subject of the new documentary "Crumb," which was the hit of this fall's New York Film Festival, might appear not to care much for blacks or Jews, and, according to the editors of *Race & Reality*, a white-power organ published in Massachusetts, that is as it should be. Recently, two parts of a three-part strip of Crumb's—entitled "When the Niggers Take Over America!" and "When the Goddamn Jews Take Over America!"—were reprinted by *R. & R.* without his knowledge or consent. A number of readers of *Weirdo*, the liberal, satirical magazine where the strip originally appeared, last year, and also a number of Crumb's peers, were disturbed not just by the strips themselves but by Crumb's having dreamed them up in the first place.



"The strips were never *not* going to happen—they even freaked me out, but I had to do them," Crumb said from his home in the South of France, where he has lived for three and a half years with his second wife, the editor of *Weirdo*, Aline Kominsky ("a Jew"), and their thirteen-year-old daughter ("a Jew by half—I am an Anglo-Saxon Protestant male").

"America is a country just *filled* with racist thoughts," he continued. "When I was growing up, the image of the status quo was based pretty much on what white guys from the South thought, which is to say what *they* believed in—mostly other guys who looked like them. That's over with. Or so I thought. I respond to individuals. When I was in America last, I was shocked that all the stuff I'd thought would be over with by now—racism, sexism—wasn't finished. It's still there—only people are not so *overtly* sexist or racist. They just hide it under that bogus politically correct stuff. That's kind of what the genesis of these strips was: the desire to mush America's politically correct hypocrisy in her face. One of the points in doing the strips was to ridicule neo-Nazi knuckleheads." Drawn in his customary crosshatched style and exhibiting his fondness for characters who drool and perspire profusely, the strips do indeed push readers' fears in their faces. In "When the Niggers Take Over America!" Crumb asks, in an image that shows three black men looking straight at you, "Are you afraid of black men?? You oughta be . . . They hate your white guts!"

"I just had to expose all the myths people have of blacks and Jews in the rawest way possible to tilt the scale toward truth," Crumb says. "Recently, I did a drawing called 'Devil Girl.' She doesn't have a head at the beginning. Now I wonder: Will the feminists get me?"

FLAUBERT'S FRIEND

IN the introduction to his great translation of "Madame Bovary," Francis Steegmuller, who died last month in Naples, at the age of eighty-eight, wrote of the difficulties involved in translating Flaubert's masterpiece, and of the need to understand small details of provincial French society during the July Monarchy. He pointed to a scene where Emma Bovary, dining among her social betters, was surprised to find that the other ladies did not put their gloves in their wineglasses. "Provincial *bourgeoises* of that time, brought up in a spirit of genteel puritanism, considered it ladylike to eschew wine at dinner parties," he explained. "Ladies of the old aristocracy were freer in their behavior." It is characteristic of Steegmuller that his sense of obligation as a translator extended to revealing the meaning embedded in the scene, and that his diligence enabled him to do so.

His first work for *The New Yorker*—a humorous miscellany entitled "Ship News"—appeared under the pen name Byron Steel in 1927, and his last, an account of being mugged in Naples, appeared in 1986. Whatever the subject, Steegmuller's writing was imbued with acute observation and with a clarity and simplicity of style that only appear effortless. Returning to his beloved Paris after the Liberation, he reported, as a Far-Flung Correspondent, on the scarcity of food. When a French friend came visiting, Steegmuller offered him an orange he had got from an Army mess and apologized for not being able to offer more. "Excuse me for laughing at your apology," the friend said. "This will be my first orange in five years. May I really eat it?" Steegmuller's generosity comes through not so much in the gift of the orange as in his appreciation of its importance to the recipient. Even his account of being mugged in Naples dealt only briefly with the *scippatori* who were responsible for his injuries, and focussed instead on the affectionate care he received in the hospital: a fellow-patient, observing him propped up in bed against a single pillow, "at once silently offers me one of his."

Steegmuller wrote of "Madame Bovary" that only "a Flaubert among translators" could convey the rhythm of Flaubert's French in a certain passage. Thinking of the glove in the wineglass, of an orange proffered and a pillow accepted, one recognizes that in his own works as well as in his translations Steegmuller was worthy of his master. ◆

This week's contributors: David Remnick, Ira Silverman & Alan A. Block, Stephen Schiff, James Traub, Hilton Als, Evan Cornog.

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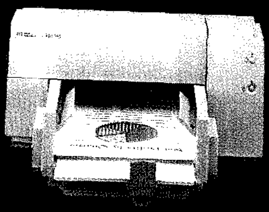

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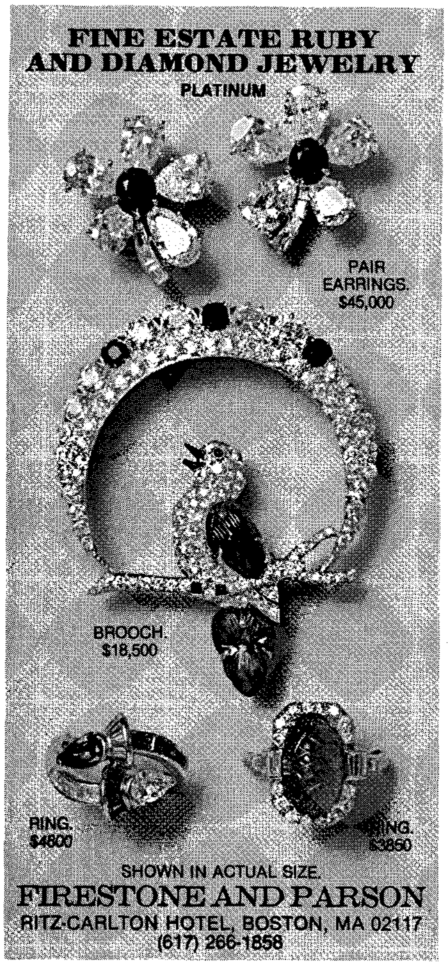

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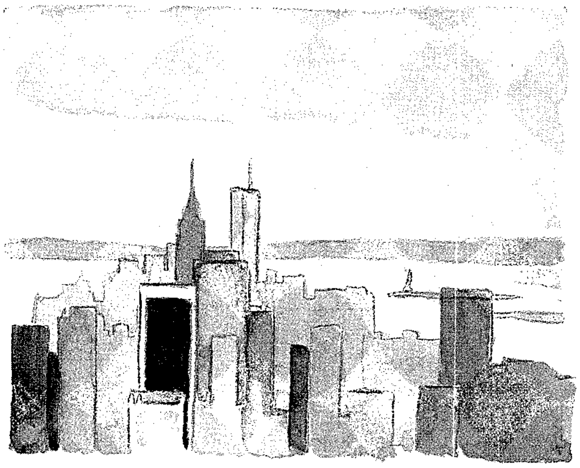
AROUND CITY HALL

CROSSING LINES

The battle royal that followed Rudy Giuliani's endorsement of Mario Cuomo denotes a political ground shift—and not necessarily one the pundits predicted.

BY ANDY LOGAN

By the third week in October, the political obituaries of Mario Cuomo, running for a fourth term as governor of this state, were ready to go at most papers. A *News* poll showed him eight points behind his Republican opponent, a state senator from upstate Putnam County named George Pataki, whom virtually no one in the city, or in most of the rest of the state, had heard of before he was nominated by the Republicans at their state convention last May. "WHAT IS A PATAKI?" was a *News* headline at the time. With the election just three weeks away, the average New York voter still seemed to have only a dim idea what a Pataki was—that is, the character and the credentials of the man who might soon be in charge of the state's government and its sixty-billion-dollar annual budget. Apparently, to most New Yorkers it didn't matter. Polls showed that over half of them had said they were voting for him just because he wasn't Mario Cuomo.



ELISHA COOPER

"It's not every day that a towering figure in American politics—one of the most famous, most charismatic, most powerful public officials in recent memory—stands on the abyss of defeat" was the lead in an October 19th *Newsday* campaign story. The *News*, endorsing Pataki, said of Cuomo, "He is a man whose time has passed." The *Village Voice*, which had doted on the Governor in other times, ran such headlines as "MARIO CUOMO, PAST TENSE" and "THE IRRELEVANCE OF MARIO CUOMO." Word of his imminent demise had reached Washington as well. On October 22nd, the "Capitol Gang" commentators Mark Shields, Albert Hunt, Robert Novak, and Margaret Carlson all agreed that he would lose. He had often been compared to the indecisive Hamlet. Now the comparison was to Lear, raging against his fate. "New Yorkers of all ideological varieties are tired of Cuomo," Novak wrote in a column. From the moment the polls started getting serious, Cuomo had never been ahead of Pataki. There were frequent complaints that he had been around too long. Pataki campaigned confidently on the slogan "It's time for a change," which, after all, worked two years ago for Bill Clinton and last year for Rudy Giuliani, who became the first mayor of this city to be elected on the Republican line since John Lindsay, in 1965. And although the campaign might end with a fallen political idol and the first victory of a Republican candidate for governor since Nelson Rockefeller, in 1970, it was often covered on the inside pages of local papers, as if reporters (and, of course, their editors) were, like other New Yorkers, just sick and tired of hearing about—and hearing from—Mario Cuomo.

Cuomo himself commented last month on the disadvantages of political longevity, saying that after his twelve years in office voters' attitude was "The guy's wife runs away, it's all Mario's fault. Your lawn turned brown? It's Mario's fault." In fact, at the Republican state convention the delegates had settled upon "It's Mario's fault!" as an informal campaign slogan, and had chanted it over and over, despite a major distraction: Gennifer Flowers was holding a press conference in the same hotel, on the floor above, to announce the availability for public sale of some tapes of her telephone conversations with Bill Clinton—a subject of obvious interest to Republicans. The press conference at which she first described what she said had been a twelve-year affair with the future President was also held in this city, in January of '92; neither she nor the President has been a local resident, so the choice seemed to prove the claim that New York is the world communications center.

"It's Mario's fault!" may not be "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too," but it seemed to be serving the Republicans well until Mayor Giuliani set off a political bombshell on October 24th. Pataki, counting on his lead in the polls, had been conducting a rather languid campaign. The imperilled Cuomo, on the other hand, had seemed to be constantly in motion, resorting to any tactic that might reverse what was being taken as the campaign's inexorable trend. Sometimes he moved so desperately that he seemed to be caught in a rundown—a reminder that, at nineteen, he had briefly been a center fielder with a Pittsburgh Pirates farm team. He even sang at rallies, hitting tunes like "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" to get the nostalgia juices running, and reminding listeners that Tony Bennett—who attended one rally with him—was also an Italian-American, originally Anthony Benedetto. Cuomo had said in the past that Joe DiMaggio, as both an Italian-American and a baseball player, had been an inspiration to him, and one afternoon in Harlem, after explaining how important black voters were to his hopes for victory, he sang Simon and Garfunkel's "Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio? A nation turns its lonely eyes to you"—presumably a reminder of how much Joltin' Joe had been missed after he left the scene. DiMaggio, however, had not kept on playing long after crowds began shouting at him that he'd been out there far too long.

What happened on October 24th certainly did not mean that the Cuomo obituaries would be filed away. But there was no doubt that it was the beginning of a whole new ballgame. Late on the af-

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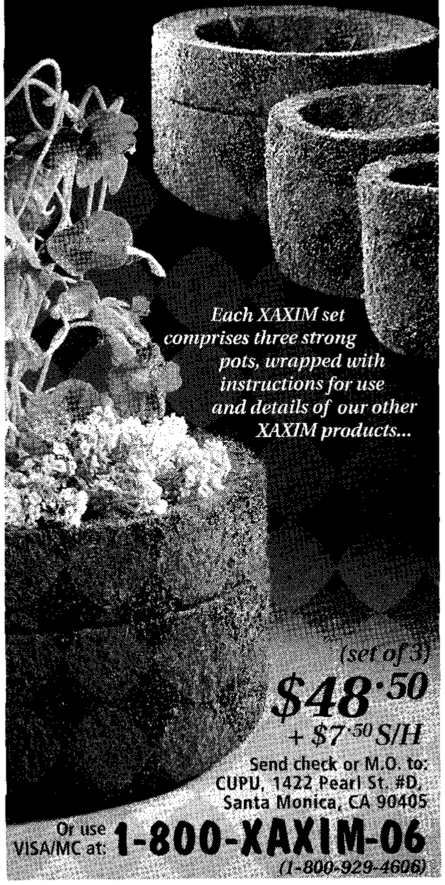

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ternoon of October 24th, Giuliani held a press conference at City Hall to announce his endorsement for the governorship. For months, his fellow-Republicans had been complaining bitterly that he had not yet endorsed Pataki. New York's Senator Alfonse D'Amato, with whom the Mayor has long been on poor terms, even announced in mid-October that, if Giuliani didn't endorse Pataki soon, the Senator would back someone else for mayor next time out. Nevertheless, Giuliani turned the local political world upside down (the adjective of choice was "stunning"; the *Times* editorial headline was "THUNDERBOLT") by revealing that his choice for governor was Cuomo. The Mayor was sweating heavily as he made the announcement, and he said later that after the press conference he had consulted the portrait of Fiorello LaGuardia, the city's first Italian-American mayor, that hangs in his office. (He had it moved back from a corridor outside, where it had been consigned by his predecessor, David Dinkins, the city's first black mayor, who had replaced it with pictures of Paul Robeson and Nelson Mandela.) The portrait of LaGuardia (a Republican, who endorsed Franklin D. Roosevelt), Giuliani insisted, gave him a vigorous nod of approval. He told reporters that he was endorsing Cuomo because Cuomo was the best candidate for the city and the surrounding suburbs (which account for more than half the state vote) and would be by far the better governor of the state. He did not, however, simply make his announcement—dramatic enough—and then step back. He launched into what the *Times* described as "a merciless barrage" against Pataki. The Republican candidate, he said, had "studiously taken as few positions as possible" and had "vacillated" and "been ambiguous," so that although the Mayor had tried to find out Pataki's positions on the issues, he had no idea where the candidate stood on most of them. The Mayor also said—in a kind of political kiss of death—that Pataki was "a genuinely nice man."

"POPE? NOPE" was the *Newsday* headline after word came from the Vatican that Pope John Paul II, because of frail health, would not be making a scheduled October visit to this city. Despite the claim of professional boosters

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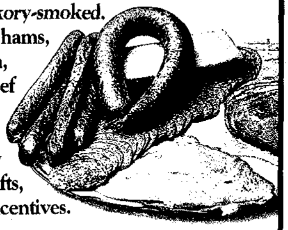

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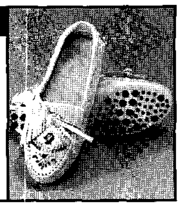
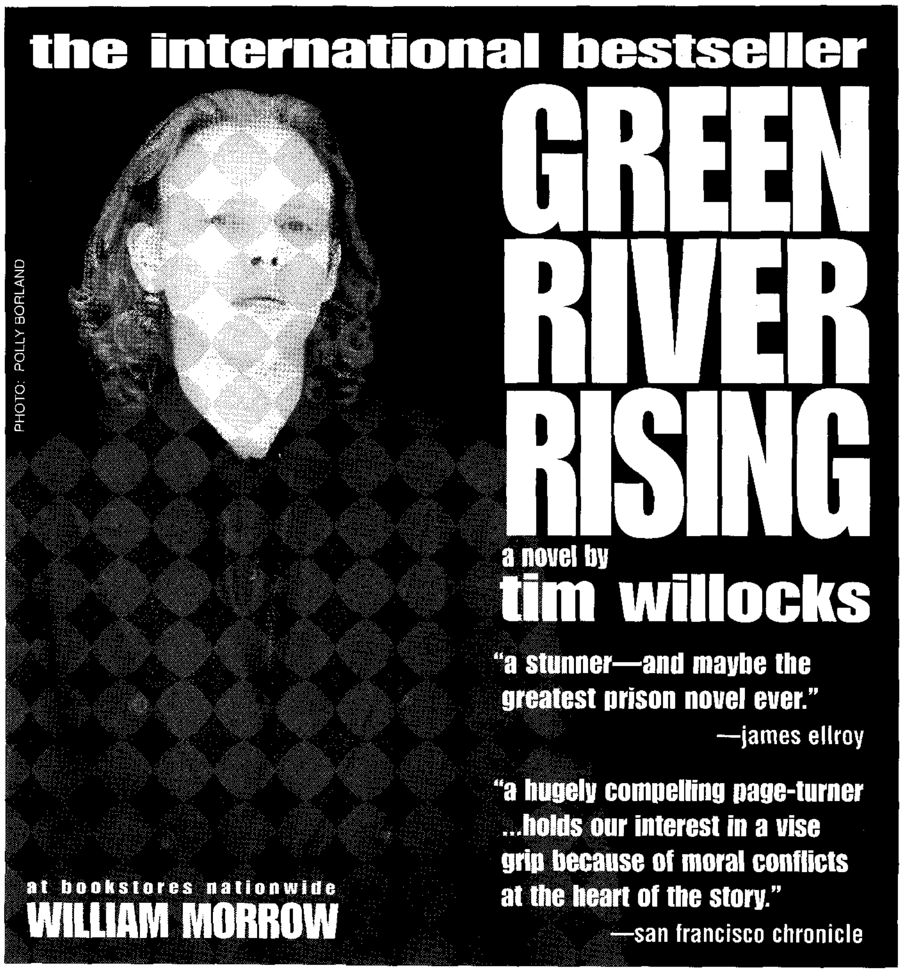


that New York is the capital of practically everything (not only communications but finance, the arts, sports, etc.), recent local headlines often dealt with ballyhooed events that were not going to happen here. The Yankees, for example, being on strike, would not be playing in the World Series here. Also because of a labor dispute, the Rangers would not be defending—at least for a while—their Stanley Cup. Things began to look up for the boosters as New York seemed to have a good chance of being chosen as the site of the 1996 Republican National Convention. (The Democrats had already settled on Chicago.) In August and again in mid-October, members of the G.O.P. site-selection committee spent several days here taking measurements of Madison Square Garden and touring the sights of the city—not including the South Bronx, which, doubtless owing to the Schadenfreudian factor, is a big favorite among tourists. Spokesmen for the committee explained that they had put New York on the list as a possible Convention site after Giuliani was elected, last November. They added that the city's chances would be greatly enhanced, of course, if the Republican candidate for governor also won. If New York did get the nod, it would make history, the city having never been the site of a Republican National Convention. The Democrats, on the other hand, have held their National Convention here five times, beginning in 1868, when a former New York governor, Horatio Seymour, was nominated at Tammany Hall, down on Fourteenth Street. (He lost.) The later Democratic gatherings were held in one or another of the four incarnations of the Garden, only the first two of which were on Madison Square.

In fact, candidates from New York, although the nominations took place elsewhere, dominated the Presidential-election process from the end of the Civil War until just after the Second World War. In three-quarters of the national elections during that period, a New Yorker—usually a present or former governor—was the (often successful) candidate on either the Democratic or the Republican ticket. In 1944, *both* major-party Presidential nominees—Franklin D. Roosevelt and Thomas E. Dewey—had been governors in Albany. As it turned out, Roosevelt was the last New Yorker to be elected, and Dewey be-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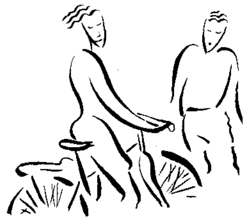

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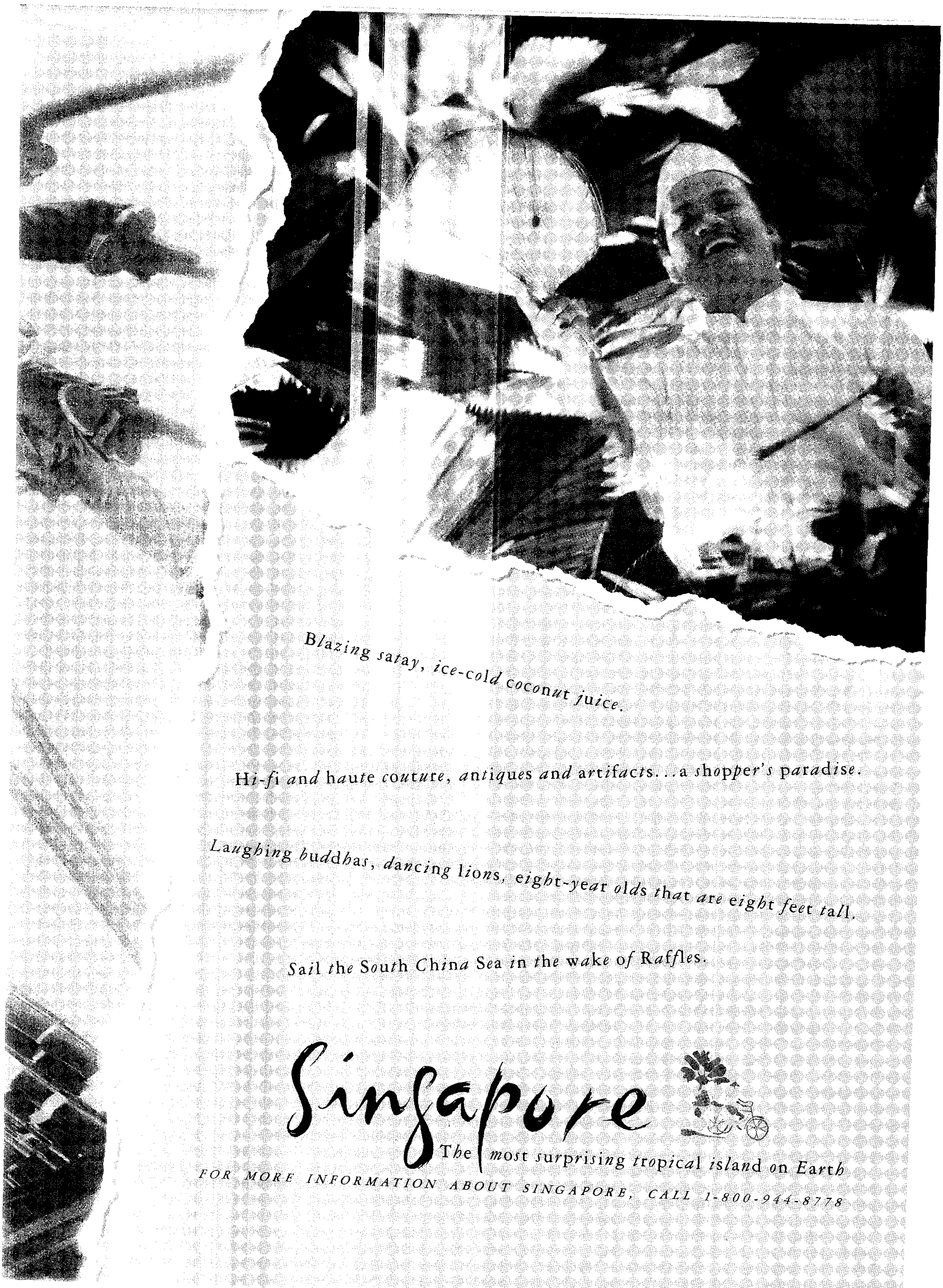

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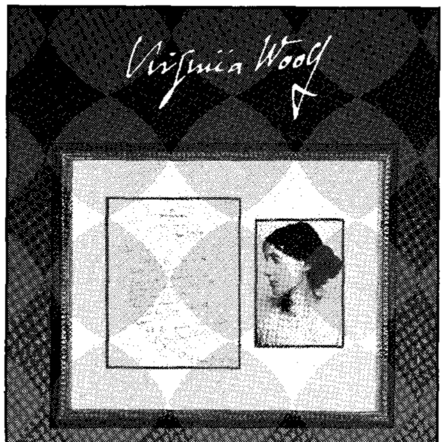

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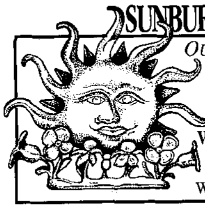

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came, in 1948, the last New Yorker to be nominated. (He lost.) After Giuliani resigned as United States Attorney, to run for mayor, reporters found in his Justice Department office a newspaper open to a story with the headline "GIULIANI AND DEWEY—CAREERS COMPARED." Nelson Rockefeller, a would-be Presidential nominee, was nearly booed off the stage at the 1964 Republican Convention; John Lindsay, who had switched over to the Democrats, lasted only a few months in the 1972 campaign for the White House; and Mario Cuomo took himself out of the most recent Presidential race in December, 1991. Old habits—however presumptuous—die hard, though, and the theory that a prominent officeholder from the Empire State becomes a serious contender for the White House has persisted here and perhaps in a few other places. Certainly last November, when Giuliani was elected, there was considerable speculation about how soon it would be his turn to run for the White House—or, preliminarily, the State House in Albany. Republicans on that track are few in this city, and Giuliani was clearly one.

All this was part of the picture when the Mayor endorsed Cuomo. It didn't seem likely that the G.O.P. Convention delegates would feel at home in a city whose Republican mayor had pulled a trick like that, and New York's chances to play host to the Convention now seemed to be "NOPE." The Republicans would decide in some other place whether their nominee would be Dole, Gramm, Kemp, or Quayle, or perhaps some other one-syllable-name contender. If Giuliani does have higher political ambitions, he may recall that a few years back, when George Bush—another one-syllable man—was here at a Republican dinner to promote Giuliani as a future mayoral candidate, the President couldn't pronounce his name ("Ger-ul . . . Gular . . . "). "It's hard to say," Bush explained. "Italians have no problem," Giuliani said.

GIULIANI was not the first Republican to make the judgment that Pataki, for all his campaign appearances and television commercials, hadn't been saying anything. In September, Herbert London, the G.O.P. candidate for state comptroller, announced that he was not sure he could support Pataki, because he had no idea what Pataki

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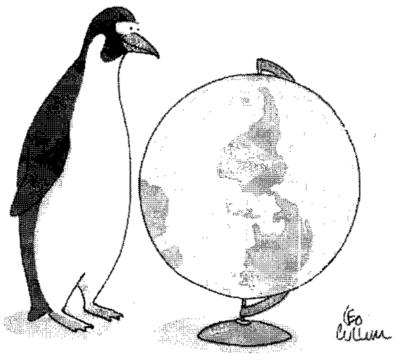

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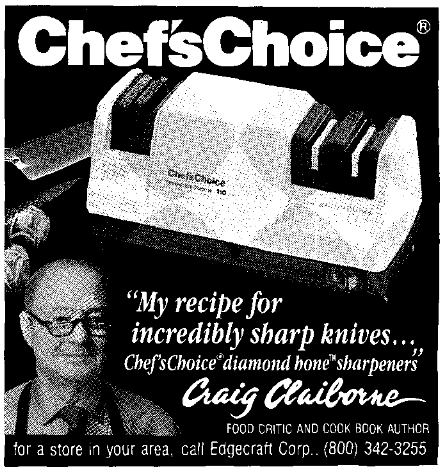

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would do about, for example, state taxes. This caused a Pataki campaign aide to speculate to Barbara Ross, of the *News*, about London's curly toupee: "There must be too much glue under that wig. It seeped into his brain." This exchange was an early indication that although the Democrats are usually the ones who go in for political vaudeville while the Republicans look on disapprovingly, this year it was the Republicans who would be putting on the sideshows. After Giuliani crossed party lines to endorse Cuomo, Guy Molinari, the borough president of Staten Island and the only Republican among the city's five borough presidents—he ran Giuliani's mayoral campaign in 1993 and this year is Pataki's campaign chairman for the city—denounced him for showing an absence of party loyalty. "I created a Frankenstein," he said, referring to his long support of Giuliani. And he was so angry at London's criticisms of Pataki that he announced he was disendorsing London for state comptroller and would vote instead for the Democratic candidate, Carl McCall. Bipartisanship was breaking out all over. McCall is the only black on the two statewide tickets, and Molinari's move was considered an act of especially deep political hostility, since Staten Island is by far the whitest of the city's five boroughs.

The most frequently quoted comment on Pataki in the Mayor's endorsement was his statement that he admired Cuomo because "he's his own man," whereas Pataki was "guided, scripted, and directed by others." Giuliani made the point many times in the days that followed, as he campaigned for Cuomo, often side by side with him. Everyone knew that the reference was to Senator D'Amato, who, as Cuomo had frequently mentioned—and Giuliani now did also—had raised most of the money for Pataki's campaign and provided most of the candidate's campaign staff. In June of 1993, D'Amato had announced that he would run for governor himself, but he changed his mind when a possible Republican takeover of the United States Senate seemed to promise that he might become chairman of the Senate Banking Committee. Instead, he chose Pataki as his candidate, which meant that, if Pataki won, Albany would have what London called an Alfonse Pataki regime. At the convention last May, D'Amato pushed through the Pataki nomination, brooking no opposition. Republicans who had hoped to compete for the nomination demonstrated outside the convention with hand puppets, Pataki being the puppet. The puppeteer, in honor of the ethnic connection, was sometimes referred to as Gepetto. "The Godfather" was also mentioned—a reference that came to mind again last month, when Republicans were complaining that Giuliani hadn't yet endorsed Pataki. At the bar at "21," D'Amato ran into Betsy McCaughey, his party's candidate for lieutenant governor, who had been described at the Republican state convention as being "cute as a button." The Senator told her he knew how they could get the Mayor to make the crucial endorsement: "You'll make him an offer he can't refuse."

After Giuliani endorsed Cuomo, Pataki (and many others) publicly surmised that there had been a deal according to which Cuomo would provide money that Giuliani wanted for the city. Cuomo kept explaining that for decades the problem of governors has been that when they try to push pro-city legislation through the legislature it is blocked by the Republican-controlled State Senate, made up mostly of suburbanites and upstaters (including Pataki). Nevertheless, a *Post* cartoon showed Giuliani as a dog, begging, his tongue hanging out, while Cuomo dangled a doggie goody from a box labelled "Secret Deal Biscuits." Giuliani, answering the charge that promises had been made to him, had questions about what deals Pataki had made with D'Amato. (The Reagan days of the Eleventh Commandment that forbade any Republican to speak ill of another Republican are clearly dead and gone in this state.) "Ask Al how many jobs he's been promised," Giuliani demanded at upstate rallies. "Four thousand? Five thousand?" A United States senator has fewer opportunities for patronage than a governor has. If D'Amato—or, as he is informally referred to, The Fonz, after the Italian-American on "Happy Days"—were in a position to work the possibilities open to both a senator and a governor, he would be a one-man Fat Tuesday. In the most frequently run Cuomo commercial, a narrator lists all the ties between Pataki and D'Amato while Paul Simon's "You Can Call Me Al" plays in the back-

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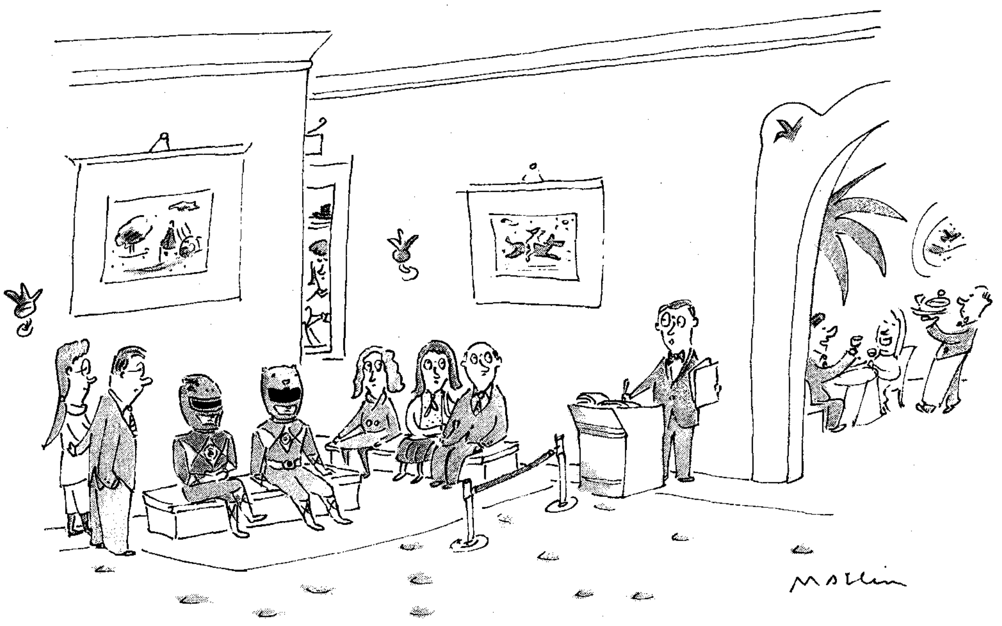

"Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. Party of two."

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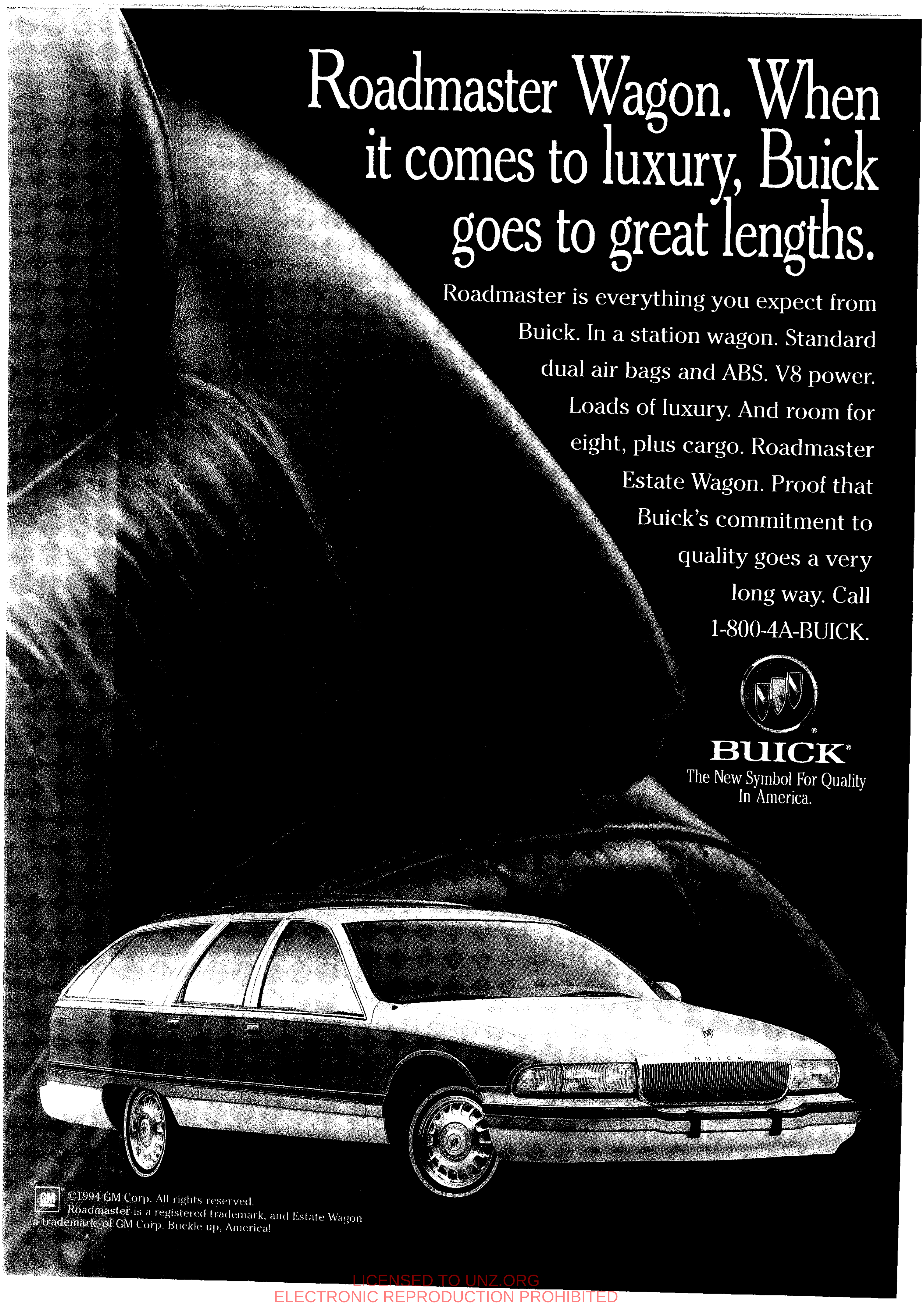
ground. (Simon, who is from Queens, has turned out to be a major performer in the campaign.) The camera then zeroes in on a blowup of a *Times* photograph, taken at a fund-raiser two months after Pataki, the neophyte big-time pol, was nominated, showing the six-foot-five candidate being led around by the wrist by D'Amato, who looks hardly more than half his size. "George Pataki? Maybe We Should Just Call Him Al" is the legend. Pataki and his supporters surely have had it in mind that if he were to be elected he would benefit from the tradition, however faded, that New York governors may go far in national politics. Although Giuliani may have damaged himself with other Republicans by his endorsement of Cuomo, he has also managed, coincidentally, to make sure that a major rival for higher office—which Pataki would undoubtedly be if he were to become governor—has been publicly labelled a man who has given almost no thought to important issues and is accustomed to being led around by the wrist. And Pataki's rivals for any future position he might run for would have a ready-made theme song: "You Can Call Me Al."

IN the last six weeks of the campaign for the governorship, the President made two trips to the city to appear at fund-raising dinners and rallies for Cuomo and other local Democratic candidates. During a September 25th visit to a church in Harlem, Clinton told the congregation that Cuomo was "the heart you must not lose." No one was impolite enough to mention that a year earlier he had come to the city to urge with equal fervor what turned out to be the unsuccessful candidacy for reëlection of Mayor David Dinkins, who thus became the first black mayor of a large American city not to be reëlected after a single term. At the time of the September visit, both Clinton and Cuomo were being described as fighting for their political lives; the President was portrayed as doomed to lurch from one screwed-up policy to another until the end mercifully came. Russell Baker wrote in the *Times* that the President was being "torn to pieces by unrelenting partisanship." The "extraordinarily poisonous attacks" by the Republicans, he said, had left American politics "thoroughly poisoned." Clinton was also being described as a pariah among Democrats, with candidates around the country begging him to stay out of their districts. If Cuomo was among the exceptions, giving him a big welcome instead, it was for good reason. For one thing, Cuomo's own unpopularity was such that only one of the hundred Democratic members of the State Assembly—Catherine Nolan, of Queens—had invited him to campaign for her. An Albany *Times Union* front-page headline read "DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES SEE CUOMO AS AN ALBATROSS." And Clinton's approval rating in a *Times* poll of New Yorkers was fifty-five per cent—ten per cent higher than Cuomo's. The evident good fellowship between the two men, though it was undeniably a matter of mutual political self-interest, was remarkable, considering that Clinton, in his taped phone conversations with Gennifer Flowers, had referred to the Governor as "a mean son of a bitch" and agreed that "he acts like" a Mafia type. (A week before the election in 1992, William Kristol, now the Republicans' designated philosopher, read aloud excerpts from the tapes to a like-minded audience as his contribution to the democratic process.) For some people, deciding to rise above such ethnic slurs would have been almost as hard as deciding to endorse the candidate of the opposition party. On October 20th, the day after Clinton's second visit on behalf of Cuomo, the President said that "the fog" was "beginning to clear." And the take for the October 19th fund-raiser was said to have been two and a half million dollars. Clinton's polls were also up substantially; the antidote to the poisonous attacks had been a heavy dose of foreign-policy derring-do. The President called Cuomo "a national treasure," and said that the reason Cuomo had not accepted the offer of a Supreme Court appointment was his love for New York, and particularly for Queens (unlike George Bush, Clinton did not say "the Queens"). But the national treasure's poll ratings remained about the same. There was no way that Cuomo could raise his approval level with bluster about invading—and then a decision not to invade—New Jersey. Help was at hand, however, from a Republican City Hall.

A *Post* poll published on October 31st gave Cuomo a fourteen-point margin over Pataki; this meant that he was up twenty-two points from a poll taken by the same paper a week earlier, just before Giuliani's thunderbolt, giving Pataki an eight-point lead. For weeks, the *Post*, which had endorsed Pataki, had portrayed as a triumph each one- or two-point increase in its candidate's margin over Cuomo. The sudden reversal of for-



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tune did not cause any change in its politics. The front page was given over to the paper's endorsement of Herbert London, Pataki's running mate. London has said that Cuomo has turned New York, the Empire State, into the Vampire State. The fourteen-point Cuomo lead was reported inside the paper. No one could say, of course, whether the margin would last until the election, or even whether the poll-takers or the voters had known what they were doing in the previous weeks, when all signs indicated that New Yorkers were ready to turn the government of their state over to someone about whom—as Giuliani, who himself was elected by only two per cent of the vote, had reminded them—they knew almost nothing, rather than keep it in the hands of a candidate about whom they knew far more than they cared to. On November 3rd, the *News* had Cuomo thirteen points ahead of Pataki. Its banner headline was "FREE FALL."

"Beyond the Melting Pot," published in 1963, by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who is a candidate this year for reëlection to a fourth term as United States senator, points out that the Italians lagged behind most other turn-of-the-century immigrants in this city in getting into politics. They were two generations behind Moynihan's fellow Irish-Americans, for whom politics provided a major route out of the poverty of the Lower East Side. The Italians' insistence on a close-knit family life, based on that of villages they had left back in Italy, and their mistrust of education kept them from moving out into the non-Italian world. Now they are making up for lost time in a big way. The city's Irish-American era is old history. The last Irish-American mayor, William O'Dwyer, left office in 1950; his eighty-seven-year-old brother Paul, who was president of the New York City Council for four years, beginning in 1974, is the last Irish-American to have held citywide office. Although the first Italian-American mayor, LaGuardia, was elected in 1933, he was raised in the Southwest, and was not seen as a product of local Italian life; in some elections he did worse in Italian districts than in others. Giuliani is only the second Italian-American to be elected to a full four-year term as mayor. It wasn't until 1980 that D'Amato became the first Italian-American senator from this state. Two years later, Cuomo became the first Italian to be elected governor. Now the second most powerful politician at City Hall is Peter Vallone, of Queens, who heads the City Council. The most powerful Republican in Albany is Ralph Marino, the majority leader of the State Senate, who is from Nassau County, D'Amato's home district, where the county executive is Thomas Gulotta. The third candidate for governor, running on the Independent Fusion ticket, is a Rochester industrialist, B. Thomas Golisano, whose running mate for the lieutenant governorship is Dominick Fusco, of the Bronx: Italian all the way. There is an Italian-American member of the Supreme Court, Antonin Scalia, who grew up in Queens, and though there has not, of course, been an Italian-American President, Leon Panetta is now in charge at the White House. It seems unlikely that Phil Gramm would say dismissively, as he did a few years back, when there was talk of Cuomo running for President, "We don't have many Marios down here." Certainly Jimmy Carter would not accept the Presidential nomination, as he did, in Madison Square Garden in 1976, by thanking "the Eyetalians" for their help, nor would anyone at a City Hall meeting say, as a city comptroller did long ago when he thought LaGuardia was talking too much, "Will somebody please hit that little wop over the head."

The Columbus Day parade last month was the biggest anyone could remember. Not only were most of the local Italian-American public officials there, including Molinari and his daughter Susan, who is a member of the House of Representatives, but so were the candidates, such as Dennis Vacco, who is running for state attorney general, and Bernadette Castro, who is running against Moynihan for the Senate. (At a press conference a week before the election, Pataki couldn't remember her name.) After David Dinkins was elected, in 1989, many of the city's residents had expected that there would be a new black era in New York. It didn't work out that way, although, as Dinkins said after his loss on Election Night last November, "My friends, we have made history." It seemed during the parade last month that the Italian-Americans had taken over the city. Giuliani said later that it

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was during the parade, in which he and Cuomo marched along side by side, laughing arms swinging, that he first seriously considered endorsing the Governor. A few weeks after Dinkins was sworn in at City Hall, in 1990, someone called up the police desk there and demanded to know why a black flag was flying over the building. It turned out to be the M.I.A. flag. So far, there have been no calls to complain that the red-white-and-green Italian flag is flying over City Hall or the Albany State House, although no one would be surprised if someone called up to ask why not.

In the weeks after Giuliani endorsed Cuomo, he spent much time on the campaign trail, travelling between upstate cities to urge a vote for Cuomo and also visiting neighboring states to promote the candidacy of fellow-Republicans. It wasn't the worst way for a politician who might have higher ambitions to spend his time. It was also a welcome excuse to get away from City Hall, which has been under siege by many of his constituents, who are desperate over the harsh new budget cuts he has proposed. On his out-of-town tours, he was often called "Traitor!" or "Judas!" by Republicans. However, crowds from whom serious trouble was expected often greeted him with unexpected politeness. His bold move in endorsing Cuomo had been in all the papers, and even on television, and Giuliani now had achieved what some Americans seem to value far above wisdom or virtue or talent: celebrity. After the votes are counted, it will be time to decide how much he will be punished—or, perhaps, rewarded—for his apostasy. Cuomo's media adviser is David Garth, who has presided over seven of the last eight local mayoral campaigns, including Giuliani's in 1993. This is Garth's first venture with Cuomo. He did not immediately claim credit when his two most recent clients joined forces despite their different parties, but it can be assumed that he did not discourage them. When things have gone badly in a campaign, Garth has been quoted as saying, philosophically, "Some days you eat the bear. Some days the bear eats you." New Yorkers will soon know whether he has been able to put away two tasty meals in a row. ♦

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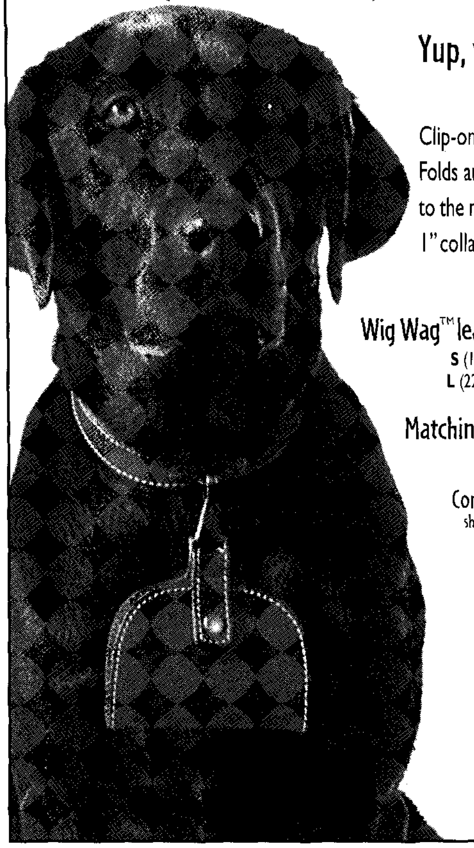

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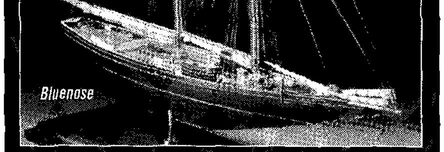

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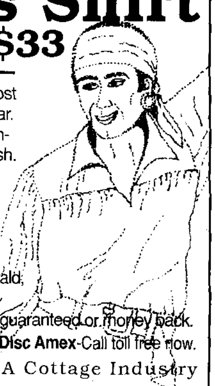

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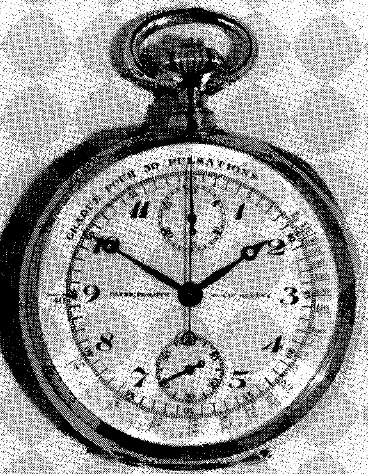

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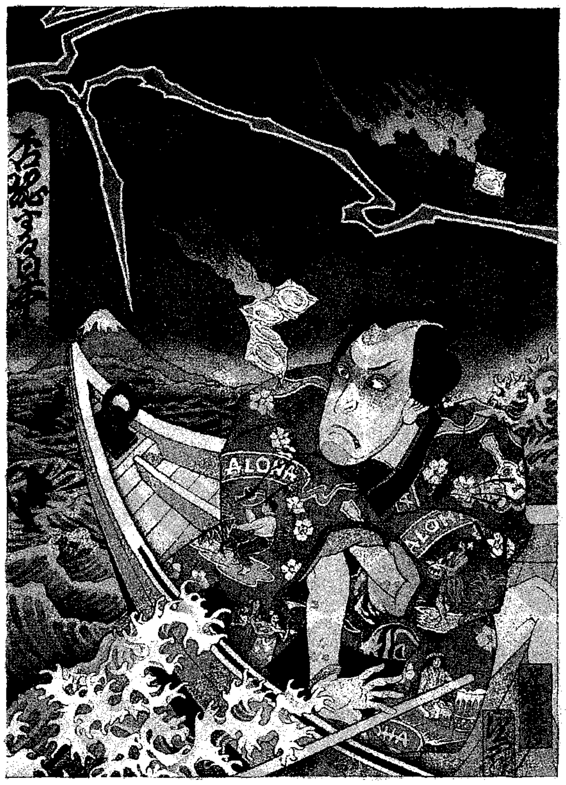
LETTER FROM JAPAN

HIDDEN DEATH

Why are some Japanese leaving their nation to die anonymously abroad? Many people with AIDS feel that they have no other choice.

BY STAN SESSER

EACH year, close to a million and a half Japanese visit Hawaii, and many of them spend their time on Waikiki Beach, Honolulu's famous tourist strip. Waikiki has become a Japanese Mecca, a place where warm sun shines all year, low American prices make everything a bargain, and Japanese is so widely spoken that some restaurants and stores have dispensed with English-language signs.



MOIRA HAHN

A few of the Japanese visitors, however, are in Waikiki for a purpose far removed from a pleasant vacation. They come to Hawaii without telling their family or friends, and each of them walks alone to an old, cream-colored building three blocks from the beach. Some are so fearful and embarrassed when they enter the building that they ask to see an English-speaking employee, someone with no possible connection to their daily lives, rather than someone who speaks Japanese. The building houses the Waikiki Health Center, and these visitors have come to get an H.I.V. test—to find out if they harbor the virus that causes AIDS. They are taking advantage of an unusual program, funded by the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare, which has established an H.I.V.-testing clinic outside Japan for its citizens. Those who fly to Honolulu feel that taking a four-thousand-mile trip is a small price to pay for a guarantee of anonymity, which they are not assured of at home, since someone there might recognize them and spread gossip. They know that if a verdict of H.I.V.-positive leaked out, they would face the equivalent of a death sentence in Japanese society, even in the absence of any symptoms of AIDS.

"Japan is a terrible place to be H.I.V.-positive or to have AIDS," I was told by Megumi Baba, a woman of Japanese birth, who is the head of the Waikiki Health Center's Japanese testing and counselling program. "Doctors don't want to deal with it. There's no support or counselling available when you get tested. Your family rejects you, and you can't even tell your best friends. Sometimes people who are H.I.V.-positive say to us that they want to stay in Hawaii to die."

In Japan, any physical disability can be a stigma and a source of shame, and many Japanese look down on people who can't be fully productive. But AIDS is the worst affliction of all, because it is perceived as a foreigners' disease in a country that is intensely xenophobic, and as a gay disease in a nation where homosexuality is still not discussed. To many Japanese, AIDS is someone else's problem. Last December, for instance, Keigo Ouchi, then the country's Health Minister, said in a speech that the "Asian nations that surround Japan are all AIDS countries." Although the official count of AIDS patients in Japan is still relatively low, this sort of attitude, combined with the rapidly rising number of Japanese infected with H.I.V., leads to predictions of a grim future. Tokyo's growing gay underground, the popularity among Japanese businessmen of sex tours to Thailand, the presence of hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asian prostitutes in Japan—"all that goes unspoken," according to Paul Groesbeck, the executive director of the Life Foundation, an AIDS social-service organization, whose clients include AIDS patients and people who are H.I.V.-positive and have fled to Hawaii from Japan. "The Japanese have been setting themselves up for disaster," he said. "They could wake up five years from now with two hundred thousand dead."

"My profession is human sexuality," Baba told me in perfect English. "I came to Hawaii in 1989 because we don't have any such positions in Japan. In 1989, no one talked about AIDS. We believed that it was an American disease, that we were immune. But I realized we had thousands of Japanese tourists in Hawaii, and I saw a lot of prostitution going on at home. I felt that AIDS would be a problem for the future. In 1992, I got a thirty-thousand-dollar grant from the Japanese government. Technically, it's a research grant, but we use the money for testing, and the government knows that."

Although anonymous H.I.V. testing is available in public-health centers across Japan, Baba understands the fear that brings some Japanese to Waikiki. "They're so afraid that if they're not normal they'll be left out of society," she said. "I have a friend who's a third-generation Korean in Japan. He can't speak Korean, he has a Japanese name, and he has hidden his identity since he was twelve. He told me that if his company had known he was Korean it wouldn't have hired him. But now all big companies are rumored to have a list of who is Korean. People feel that in the same way they might get a list of H.I.V.-positives."

Baba and her assistants—twenty Japanese-speaking volunteers—have had to deal with an enormous amount of ignorance about AIDS. She says she has had calls from Japan from frantic women who were kissed by an American and wanted to know if the kiss could cause AIDS, and calls from people who had smoked marijuana in the past and were now in a panic because they had heard that there's some connection between drug users and AIDS.

"There are people in Japan who believe that being gay in itself makes you infected," Baba said. "We've had people who fly here to be tested just because they're gay. Then, when we ask them questions, they admit that they've never had sex. When we tell them that they're at no risk if they haven't had sex, they're so relieved. It's the first time they've found someone they could talk to. They feel that the plane fare was worth it."

A VISITOR to Tokyo quickly senses that something is missing. In two weeks of walking around the city's most crowded districts, passing tens of thousands of people each day as they streamed through subway and train stations, I only once saw someone in a wheelchair. That was in Shinjuku Station, a major confluence of subway and rail lines. There are almost no elevators in Tokyo subway and train stations, and the person in the wheelchair, a forlorn-looking man, was asking a station employee, visibly angered by the intrusion, to carry him up a steep flight of stairs to his train. The disabled live in their own version of a world of apartheid—a world that gives an insight into what people with AIDS, a far worse stigma, are encountering.

For two years, Yuriko Ashino, who is now deputy executive director of the Family Planning Federation of Japan, was one of the invisible, confined to a wheelchair with a bad hip. A year and a half ago, she got a hip replacement, and today she walks with a cane. "I couldn't move at all in Tokyo," she told me when I spoke with her in her apartment. "Every place had stairs." Ashino, who has written about issues involving the disabled, also found herself being treated differently from those without physical problems. "People were staring at me as if I were something weird," she said.

Those who lived in Hiroshima or

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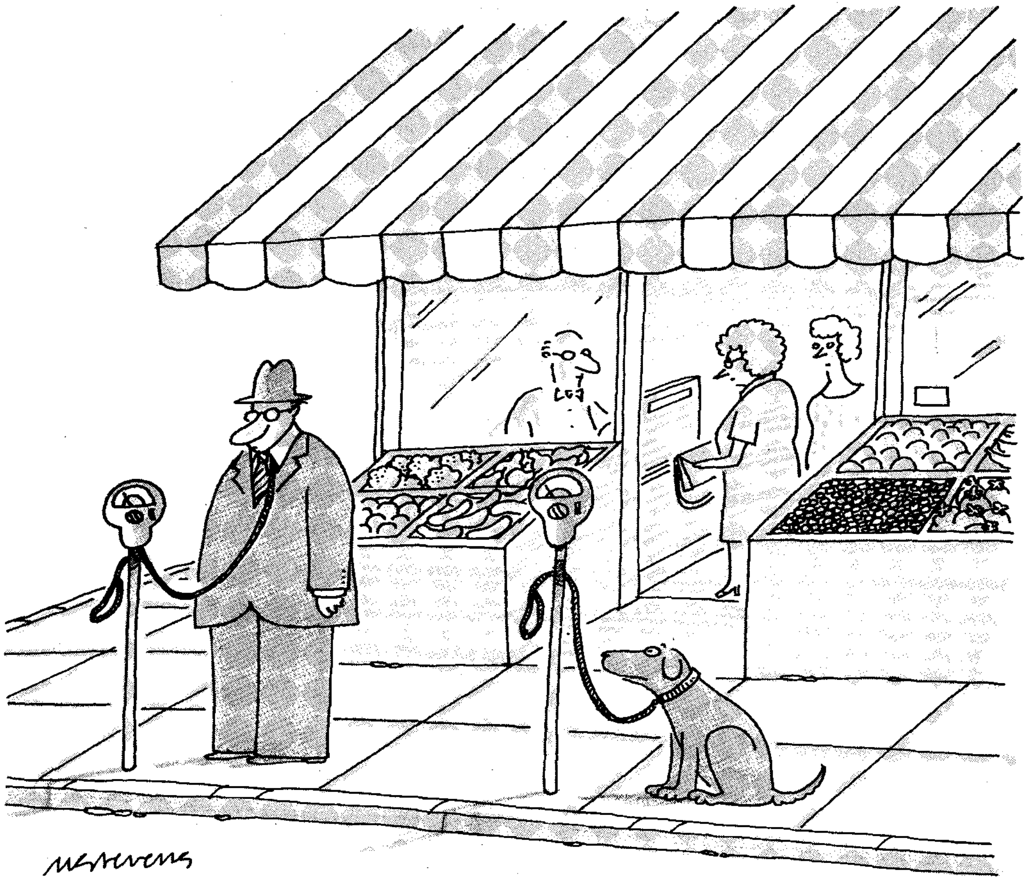

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Nagasaki in 1945 are also paying a price for being different, and so are their children. Their plight serves as a preview of the troubles that AIDS will cause in Japan years or generations from now, even if the disease itself should cease to exist. Almost half a century after the bombings, the Tokyo Federation of Atomic Bomb Sufferers still sends its members mail with a return address reading "Tokyo Friends Association." At the Federation's office, I met Chiyono Yoneda, a pleasant, gray-haired woman in her sixties, who smiles constantly. We talked about the postwar years, when few people in Japan had bathrooms, and bomb victims had to bathe in rivers, because the public baths wouldn't accept anyone with scars. Twenty-two years after the bombing, Yoneda's daughter fell in love, and went to the home of her boyfriend's parents to talk about marriage. "The man's mother said to my daughter that she had heard rumors that her parents were A-bomb victims," Yoneda recalled. "She started asking all sorts of questions about my husband's health and mine. My daughter was shocked. She felt that, even though she loved the man, she couldn't marry into a family that was unhappy with her family, and she broke off the engagement."

In conversations both with Japanese and with foreigners living in Tokyo, I asked if they could explain the prejudice against the sick and the disabled in Japan—a prejudice so deeply rooted that, in a country where the family unit is much more cohesive than it is in the United States, parents will still sometimes abandon children infected with H.I.V. I repeatedly got an answer that began with the saying "The nail that sticks up gets hammered down." I was told by Eriko Ikeda, the program director of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, who has written a book about AIDS, "Japanese society always wants everyone to be the same. If someone is different, the whole society turns against that person and attacks him. When I was a child, where village communities existed, it wasn't that way. But when Japan became economically strong, everyone talked about efficiency and wanted people who were physically whole."

With the sick and the disabled ordinarily feeling like outcasts, it's not surprising that those Japanese infected with H.I.V. are the most reclusive of all. For one of them to choose to "come out" publicly is so rare an event that the media will cover it almost as intensely as they might cover the collapse of a government. In 1992, Yutaka Hirata, a gay poet using a pseudonym, became the first person in Japan to admit publicly that he had contracted AIDS through sex. He made the announcement at a press conference in a hotel banquet room, with more than a hundred reporters, several dozen photographers, and a dozen television cameras in attendance. That night, nearly every television station in the nation broadcast excerpts from the press conference.

Although Japan has been facing AIDS for almost a decade—starting in the mid-nineteen-eighties, when hemophiliacs were infected by contaminated blood imported from the United States, followed by a steadily rising toll of H.I.V.-positives among both homosexuals and heterosexuals—Hirata was one of only five people who had AIDS or were H.I.V.-positive who had identified themselves publicly. Eriko Ikeda, who has produced several documentaries on AIDS, told me, "The first one who came out—Noriyasu Akase, a hemophiliac—thought that he would inspire dozens of others, and that that would lessen the prejudice. This was in 1988. But here it is six years later, and there have been only five altogether. A few others—fewer than ten—have been willing to talk about it if the camera hides their faces."

Yutaka Hirata died of pneumonia on May 29th. Two months before, I had visited him at his home, a small rental house in the suburb of Chiba, which is about an hour's train ride from Tokyo. A tall, thin man in his forties with a sparse mustache, he embraced me when I entered—a startling gesture in a country where physical contact even among family and friends is rare. We sat on the floor at a low table along with my interpreter and a young medical student named Toshiaki Hirata, who said he intended to become the first openly gay doctor in Japan.

I asked Yutaka Hirata why he came

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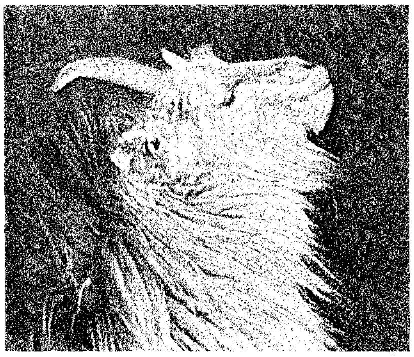

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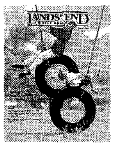

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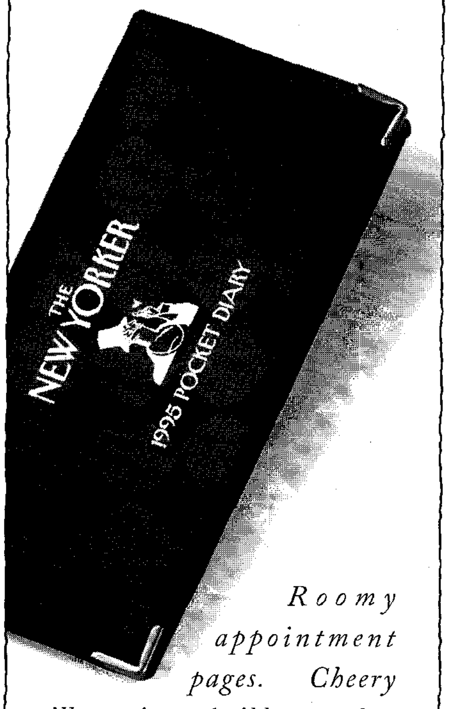

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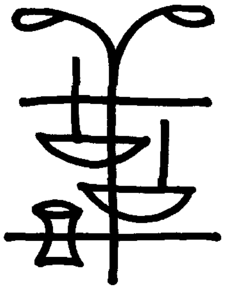
out. "When AIDS first became known, everyone thought it was a gay disease," he replied. "In Japan, many gay people are still hiding. Many of those with H.I.V. don't use their medical insurance, because they're afraid of becoming known. They have to come out and openly press for their rights. Only then can the attitudes change. I want to tell other AIDS patients, 'You don't have to die alone.' " Yutaka Hirata, who published books of poetry and also essays, some of them about AIDS, said that, despite his belief in openness, he used an assumed name to protect his family. "My parents and my brothers and sisters are all in business," he explained. A few days later, a friend of his told me that Yutaka Hirata's sister had threatened to commit suicide if he used his real name.



The intense shame about AIDS and the resulting secrecy make it futile to try to determine how many Japanese are infected with H.I.V. The official government statistics show that by the end of June, 1994, Japan had a cumulative total of seven hundred and sixty-four AIDS patients, of whom four hundred and forty-one had died. The total of those known to be H.I.V.-positive stood at three thousand and seventy-five. But even Dr. Naoko Yamamoto, the deputy director of the Office of Infectious Disease Control, at the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and one of the government's top AIDS officials, conceded that this count was far from accurate. "Our H.I.V.-positive cases are maybe fifteen to twenty thousand," she told me. "That's a reasonable estimate."

The inadequacy of the official statistics is explained in part by the fact that a very large proportion of the Japanese who are at risk for H.I.V. are afraid to get tested. Although the testing is anonymous, the fear of the result's leaking out is not unwarranted. "In some localities, there is only one place to get the test, and it is connected to the local government," I was told by Teishiro Minami, who is the secretary-general of AIDS Action, a group that helps those infected with H.I.V. "If you go into one of these clinics, rumors will start." Skip Swanson, an American who works for the Japan H.I.V. Center, a similar organization, said that many of those who contemplate being tested have the thought, "If people discover I'm H.I.V.-positive, my family will reject me, I'll be fired from my job, I'll lose my friends, and I'll have no means of support." He said, "These are perceptions," and he went on, "Add to that the reality that if you live outside of Tokyo you'll have to move, then what incentive is there to find out if you're H.I.V.-positive?"

The government requires that all doctors inform the Health Ministry of non-hemophiliac instances of H.I.V. But some doctors, who themselves feel stigmatized by having an H.I.V. patient, will record the illness as something else. Yuriko Ashino told me that she had heard of doctors' failing to report an H.I.V.-positive patient, "because they're afraid that once it's reported, people won't go to the clinic or hospital out of fear of being infected." She went on to say, "Also, outside Tokyo some public-health officials fail to report H.I.V. infections because they don't want their city to be looked down on as a town that's contaminated. Most prefectures in Japan have more than a million people, and the smallest is more than six hundred thousand, yet there is still one prefecture that doesn't have a single reported H.I.V.-positive case."

The difficulty of gathering any meaningful statistics is further illustrated by the fact that no one has even the remotest idea how many H.I.V.-positive Japanese have fled Japan for Honolulu, San Francisco, and other American cities. But those who assist these Japanese exiles tell poignant stories about their attempt to die with dignity in the absence of family members or friends to care for them and console them. John Silva, a Californian of Filipino descent, who was the first executive director of San Francisco's Gay Asian Pacific Alliance Community H.I.V. Project, told me about a Japanese accountant in his forties who decided two years ago that he wanted to return to his home in Osaka to die. "We had to inform the parents that he was sick and was planning to come home," Silva says. "One day, without calling us, his sister from Japan showed up in our office and asked to be taken to see him. She refused to enter his bedroom but talked to him from the hallway outside the bedroom door.

She told him not to come back, because it would be shameful for the family—that it was best for him to die in San Francisco."

YUTAKA HIRATA'S advice to homosexuals about coming out is not being widely followed. Japan has one group of young gays and lesbians, called OCCUR, that considers itself to be an activist organization. The head of OCCUR, Hiroshi Niimi, who is twenty-nine, regularly wears a button that says, in English, "Militant Homosexual." But Niimi told me that of OCCUR's members, who number three hundred, only about fifteen would be willing to speak out publicly as homosexual, and none of the fifteen work for a company.

The cavernous closet that houses Japan's homosexuals is a puzzling phenomenon to visitors. Unlike the United States, with Catholicism and Christian fundamentalism, Japan has no religious tradition that considers homosexuality morally wrong. Today—at least, late at night, when the closet doors open—Tokyo and Osaka have a thriving gay culture. An area of Tokyo called Shinjuku Ni-chome has scores of gay bars, and on weekend nights the streets are filled with gay men.

But the historical tolerance of homosexuality in Japan gave way to the stifling conformity that accompanied economic prosperity. "In many companies today, you don't get promoted if you're not married," Skip Swanson told me. "You're not considered a complete adult." Within marriage, homosexuality, as long as it is practiced discreetly, becomes more acceptable. "Lots of men have mistresses, and some have misters," an American gay activist in Tokyo said. "The wives don't ask questions as long as he gets home on time and provides money."

The widespread use of prostitutes contributes substantially to the H.I.V.-infection rate. Since 1990, the number of Japanese heterosexuals who have tested positive for H.I.V. has exceeded that of gays. Many Japanese men take sex tours to Thailand or the Philippines to sleep with prostitutes, a large proportion of whom are infected with H.I.V. But in recent years, in part because of the growing fear of AIDS, some of these men have been staying home. Apparently out of the belief that extramarital sex will somehow be safer if it's practiced in Japan rather than overseas, the pros-

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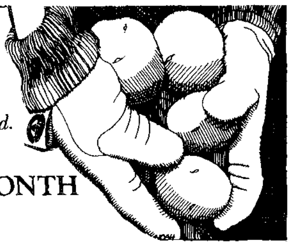

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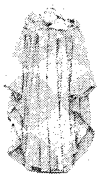

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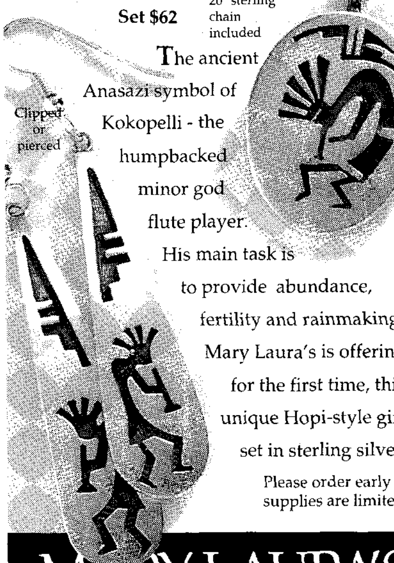

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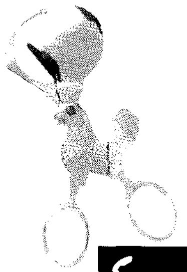

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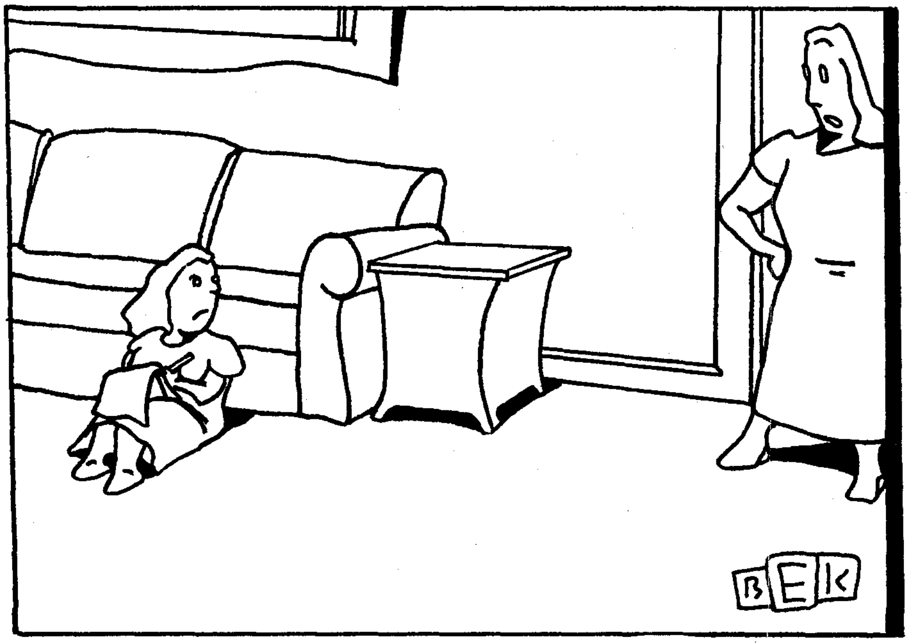
titutes are now being brought to them. Mizuho Matsuda, who is the director of HELP, a Tokyo organization that provides aid and shelter for Japanese and Southeast Asian prostitutes, told me, "The number of sex workers from overseas in Japan has tripled or quadrupled in the last decade. Our estimate is that three hundred thousand overseas women are now employed as sex workers in Japan."

Matsuda said that the fear of AIDS has not inspired patrons of prostitutes to use condoms, although, ironically, Japan has one of the highest rates of condom use in the world: because the government bans birth-control pills, half of all married Japanese couples rely on condoms. But the purpose is solely to prevent pregnancy, and the figure drops to twenty-five per cent when Japanese men visit prostitutes. "They have a false confidence that they won't get AIDS," Matsuda explained. "The women say that if one of them insists that the man wear a condom he'll often complain to the owner and she'll be beaten up."

Although the Health Ministry projects that by the year 2002 Japan will have a cumulative total of eighteen thousand people who have AIDS or are H.I.V.-positive, two Japanese epidemiologists who recently published a paper on the subject have reached a very different conclusion. They say that if the number of customers for prostitutes and the rate of condom use stay the same, "the estimated number of H.I.V.-infected persons will reach a million three hundred thousand in 1996, which will result in two hundred and thirty thousand AIDS cases in 2000."

To an American visitor, the hospital at Tokyo University appears decrepit: it is an old building, which has seemingly not been remodelled for many years, and its furnishings could date back decades. But when I visited Lawrence Berner, an American who was undergoing an experimental treatment for AIDS there, he said he had no complaints, particularly in view of what he had experienced at another hospital. The fifty-four-year-old Berner, who has worked in Tokyo since 1984, told me about his visit to Komagome Hospital in 1989, after he first experienced AIDS symptoms. Komagome, a Tokyo municipal facility, and the Tokyo University hospital are the two hospitals in Japan that care for relatively large numbers of AIDS patients.

"I had persistent diarrhea for two months, and I went to Komagome for tests," he said. "My Japanese partner and I went up to the seventh floor. They stopped him in a corridor and told him he couldn't go any farther. To talk to me, he had to use a phone in the lounge with a television hookup. The next thing they did was give me a set of rules. First, I could not leave the room. Second, I could be visited only by my biological family or by a wife, not my partner. There was



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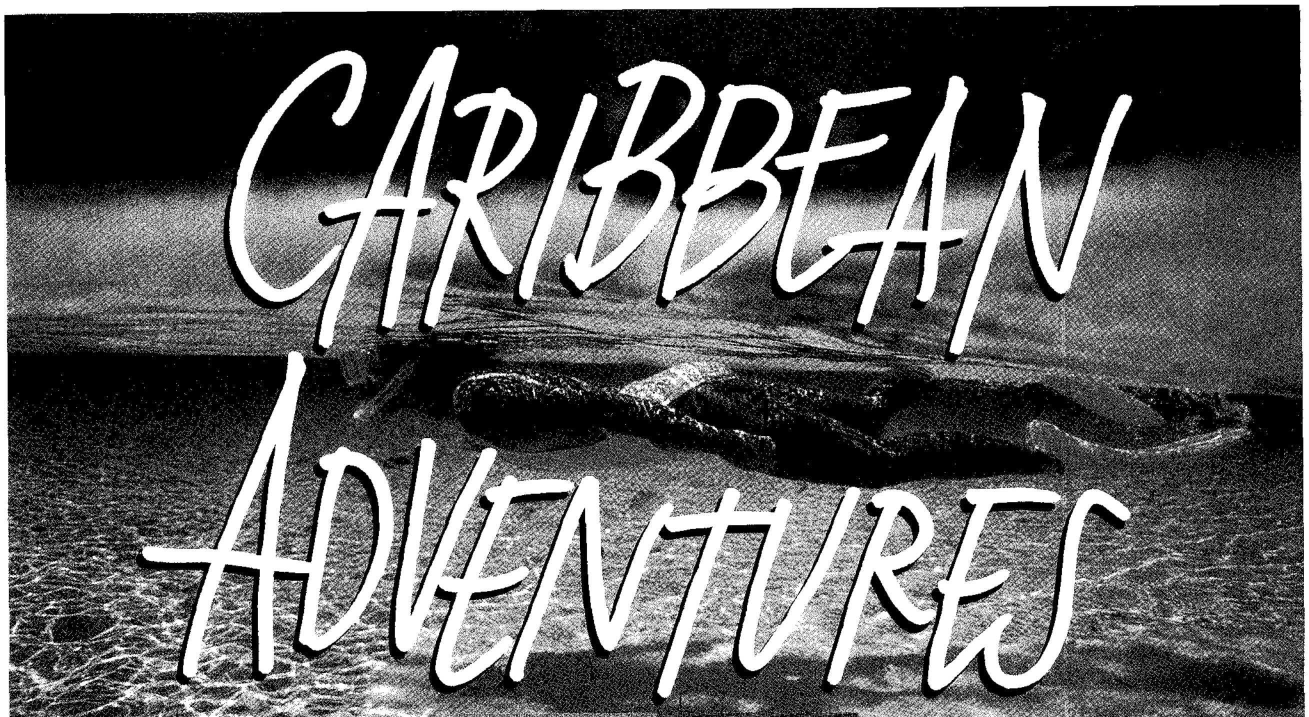

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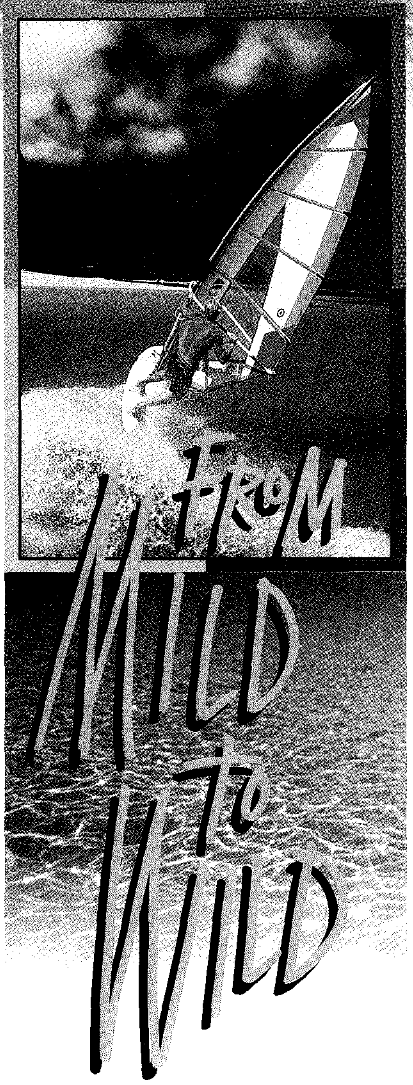

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In the Turks and Caicos, marine turtles and peaceful nurse sharks loiter in the shallow colorful reefs off Provo's north shore. Grand Cayman's popular Sting Ray City is a hangout for dozens of rays that will rub harmlessly against you — particularly if you're offering a tasty handout. But you don't need food to attract the sea lions in shallow Los Islotes Bay, near La Paz, Mexico. With a plentiful supply of sardines in their protected bay, they're more interested in playing tag with their human visitors. Other prime snorkeling areas include Curaçao's Casabao Beach, St. Croix's Buck Island, St. John's Trunk Bay, the north shore of Anguilla, Nevis's Pinney's Beach, and the caves of Norman Island, in the British Virgin Islands.

DIVING

If what you crave is a closer, deeper look at the Caribbean's unique underwater world, then scuba diving is the right way to get down to it. A half-million new divers took to the water last year, a full third of them women. The Caribbean is a perfect environment for earning your certification, or filling your log book with exotic dives to reefs, wrecks, caves, and mysterious blue holes.

Near Grand Bahama's Freeport, you can dive with tame dolphins in the open sea, or head straight for the ocean's bottom to watch decidedly untame sharks being fed by a guide (who'll be dressed in a protective suit). In the Bloody Bay area, off Little Cayman, vertical walls begin in twenty to forty feet of water and plummet out of sight. There are

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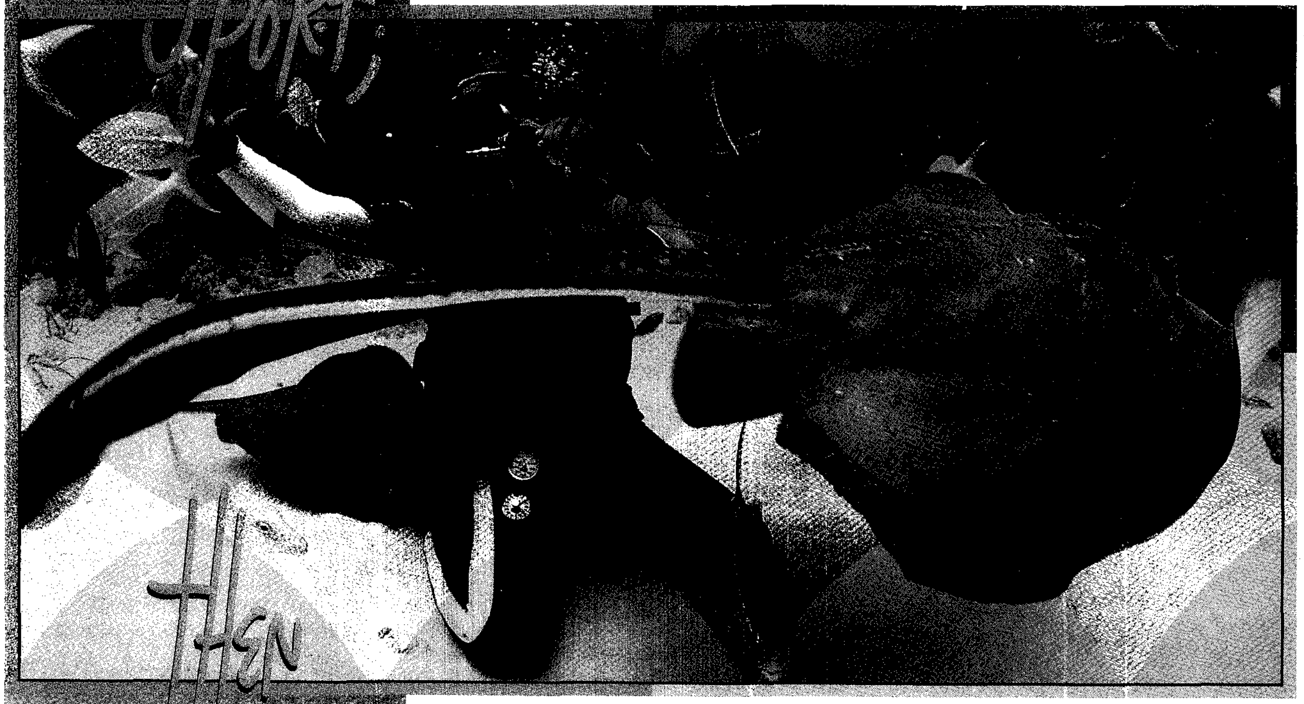
swim-through tunnels to explore, friendly groupers to pet, and a local manta ray that shows up during night dives to feed on plankton attracted by divers' lights.



For those who like their adventure on the wild side, a swim with the "natives" fits the bill

Jeff Rotman

In the British Virgin Islands marine park, the 1867 wreck of the R.M.S. *Rhone* lies in two pieces on the sandy bottom. During a two-tank dive, you can enter the coral-encrusted interiors of both sections. Wall diving near Bahamian San Salvador is like peeking over the edge of the world. Visible here are Atlantic pelagics — deep-sea creatures who rise to feed along the walls. In Bonaire, all roads lead to dive sites — a remarkable eighty of them — and you can wade from any beach for a short swim to pristine reefs. Neighboring Curaçao rivals Bonaire's marine largess but has much more to offer topside. It hasn't yet been completely discovered by travelers for the outstanding dive destination that it is.

When weather shifts the sandy bottom, visiting divers often find Delft plates and pewter utensils off the coast of St. Eustatius, where two Spanish ships sank two hundred and fifty years ago. All artifacts must be donated to the island museum, but the thrill of discovery will remain with you forever. Belize boasts the largest living coral reef in this hemisphere, a fishy condo stretching a hundred and eighty-five miles. Other great dive spots are Cozumel, Mexico's top diving destination; all of the U.S. Virgin Islands; the Turks and Caicos; and Guadeloupe's Pigeon Island.

FISHING

If you prefer to interact with fish using a rod and reel, check out Ernest Hemingway's haunts in Bimini (the Bahamas), or cruise Mexico's Los Cabos, where more than ten thousand billfish are caught and released every year. A two-hundred-dollar entry fee makes anglers eligible for a million dollars in prizes during the Caymans' month-long international fishing tournament in June. Most anglers charter boats on Grand Cayman, site of the headquarters and weigh station. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, there's always a fishing tournament going on somewhere, and more than twenty world record-setting fish have been caught in these waters. The longest-running competition is St. Thomas's July Open Sportfishing Tournament. The waters around Puerto Rico, the Caicos, the Bahamas, and Jamaica are also famous for their deep-sea game fish — wahoo, sailfish, tuna, barracuda, marlin, to name just a few. Spring and autumn are prime fishing times, but many big catches are also hauled out of the briny depths in winter.

SAILING

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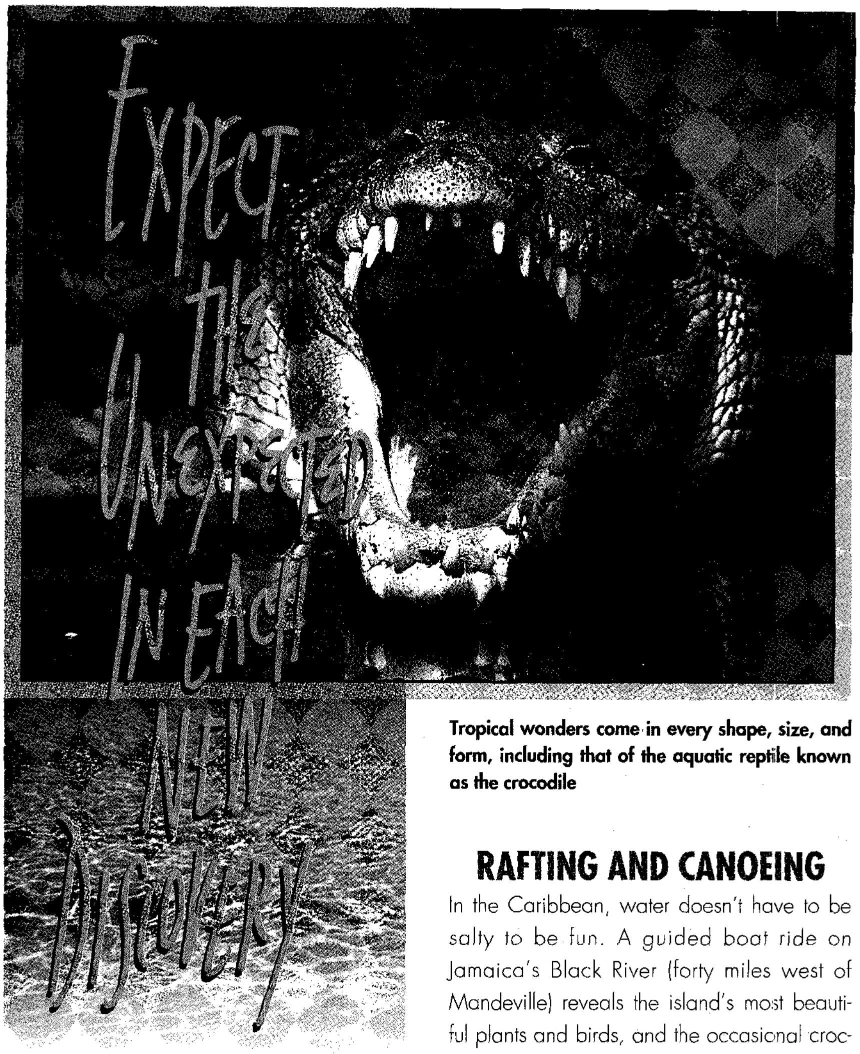


Stephen Cooper

Tropical wonders come in every shape, size, and form, including that of the aquatic reptile known as the crocodile

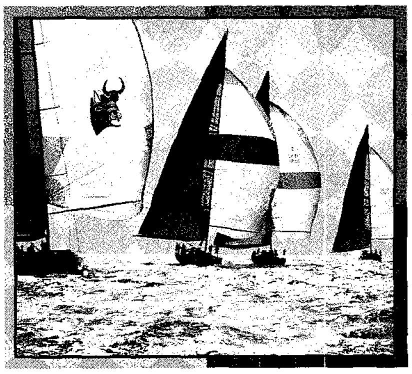
Grenadines, you're never far from a safe harbor where you can enjoy the local nightlife, or from a secluded cove where you can play out your island fantasies. The British Virgin Islands berth the world's largest concentration of charter boats — five hundred in Tortola alone. But rental craft are available, with or without crew, throughout most of the islands. A good place to take the wheel is in the Abaco Islands of the Bahamas—Walker's, Green Turtle or Treasure cays, or Marsh Harbor. The waters are easy to navigate and the ports have a New England-style charm. In Martinique's Fort-de-France, you'll find charter companies and a cultural flavor reminiscent of New Orleans. Many visitors engage boats in Grenada's Secret Harbour or St. Vincent's Blue Lagoon and head for the Grenadines.

More modest, but no less thrilling, is renting a small motorboat in any of these areas and putting from one deserted cay to the next until you find the perfect beach for a picnic and skinny-dip.

RAFTING AND CANOEING

In the Caribbean, water doesn't have to be salty to be fun. A guided boat ride on Jamaica's Black River (forty miles west of Mandeville) reveals the island's most beautiful plants and birds, and the occasional crocodile. And that country's Rio Grande River (near Port Antonio) and Martha Brae River (near Montego Bay) are tamer and best seen from a two-passenger bamboo raft guided by a poleman. As you glide past villages, native children swim out to peddle flowers or cold drinks, or invite you to a delicious jerk-chicken luncheon on the banks. Any of the island's many resorts can arrange such a trip for you.

Suriname, on the northeastern coast of



Courtesy U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Tourism

Sailboats race in the U.S. Virgin Islands

ve could really use a vacation exploring new sights."

Camuy, Puerto Rico.
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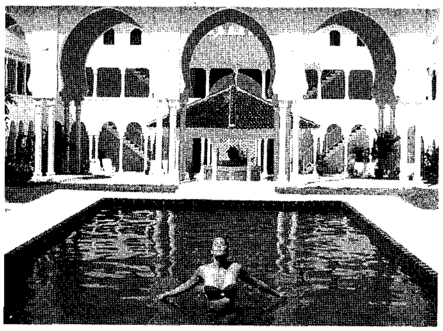

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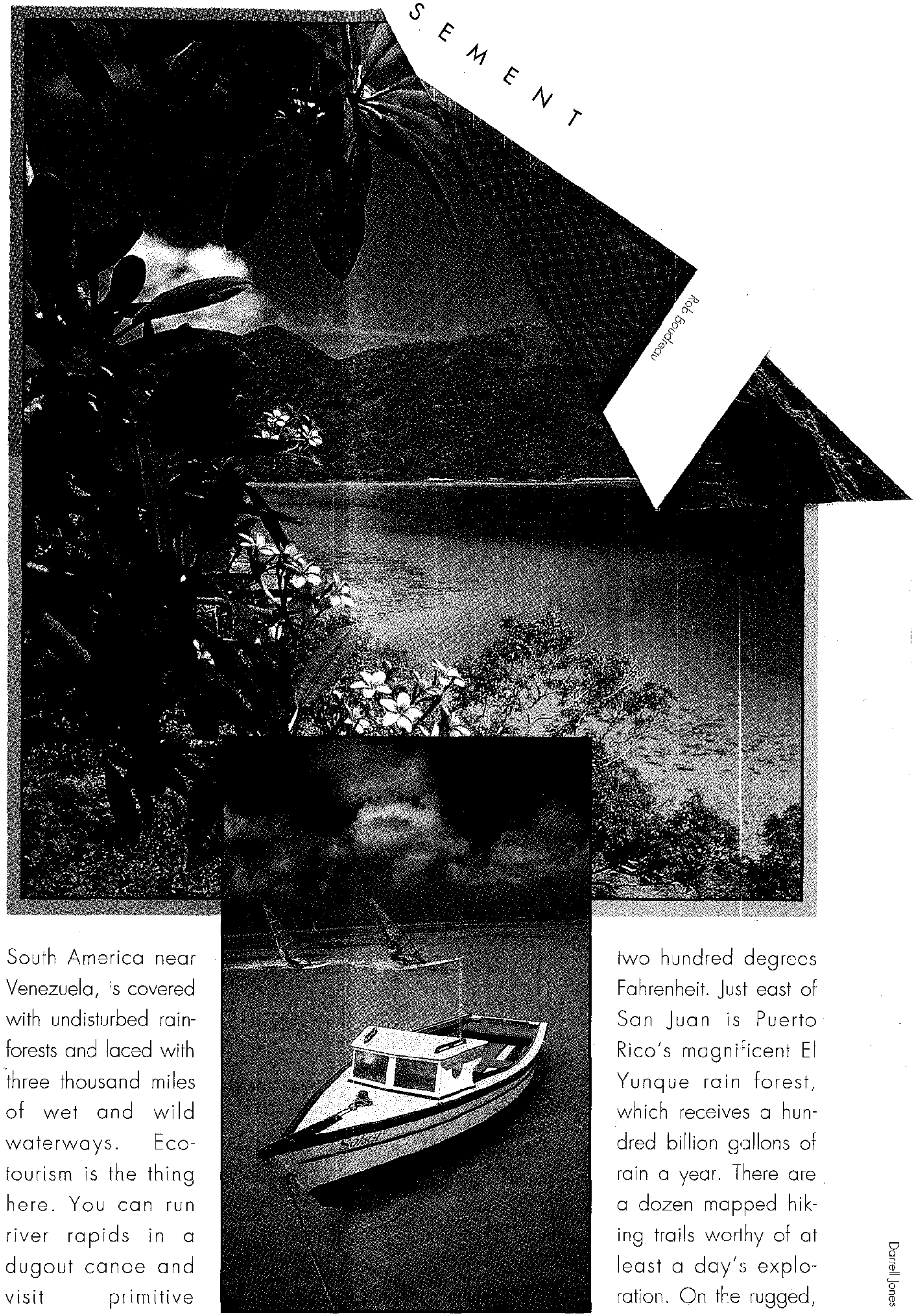


Rob Boudreau

Darrell Jones

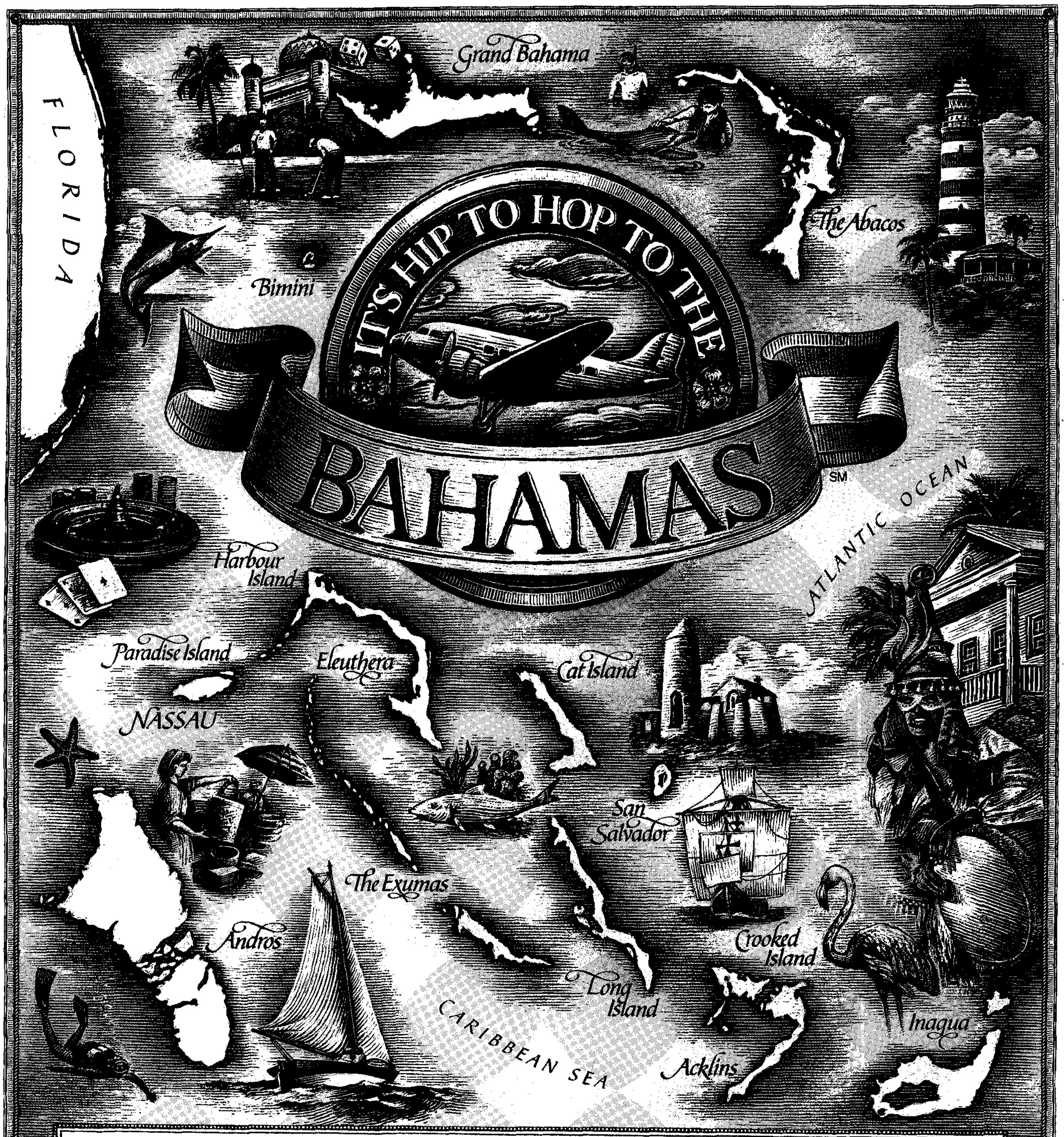
From top: **Hiking provides spectacular island views; windsurfers glide along the water**

South America near Venezuela, is covered with undisturbed rainforests and laced with three thousand miles of wet and wild waterways. Eco-tourism is the thing here. You can run river rapids in a dugout canoe and visit primitive Amerindian villages, yet stay in a lovely modern hotel.

HIKING

Most Caribbean Islands are actually the tops of volcanic mountains, and that unique environment creates strange and beautiful lands to explore. Take a hike on the wild side in Dominica, where Boiling Lake and the Valley of Desolation lie at the end of a rugged six-mile climb. Arrange for a guide at the tourist office in Roseau and follow him closely, because molten lava bubbles just beneath the earth's crust and heats the lake to nearly two hundred degrees Fahrenheit. Just east of San Juan is Puerto Rico's magnificent El Yunque rain forest, which receives a hundred billion gallons of rain a year. There are a dozen mapped hiking trails worthy of at least a day's exploration. On the rugged, six-mile El Toro Trail you may see an endangered Puerto Rican parrot, or even a rare Puerto Rican boa. Twenty-six animal species seen here are found nowhere else in the world.

Sandwiched between Suriname and Venezuela is English-speaking Guyana. You can hire a guide in Georgetown to take you to Kaieteur, a waterfall four times higher than Niagara Falls, and into the interior rainforests, where the world's largest species of water lily grows. A walk up a thousand and sixty stone steps may sound comparatively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Grand Bahama
The Abacos
Bimini
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BAHAMAS
SM
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Harbour Island
Paradise Island
NASSAU
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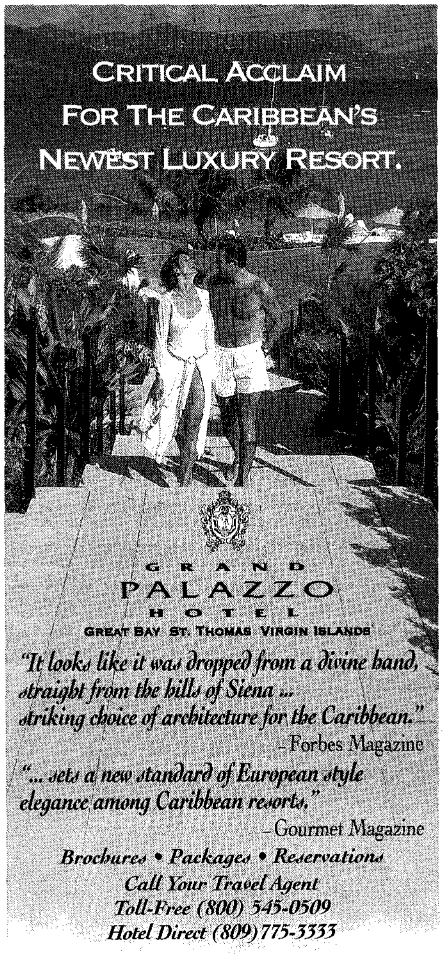

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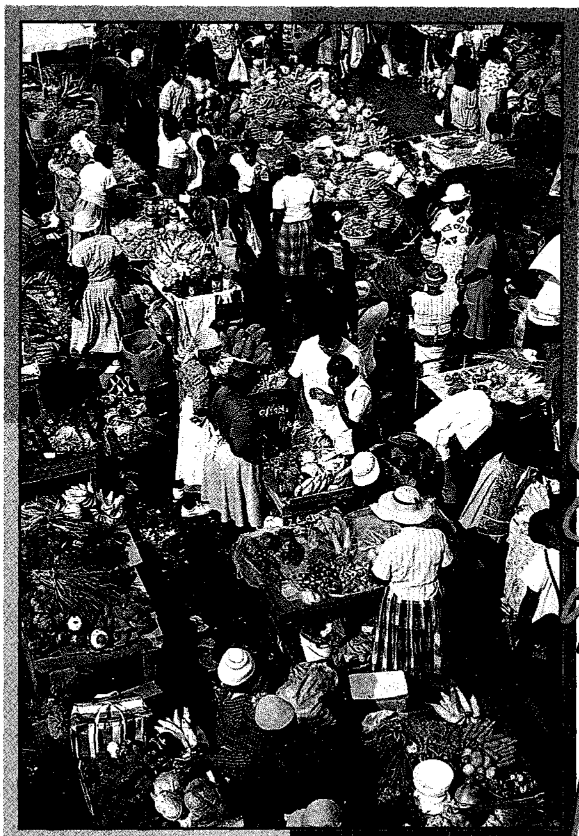
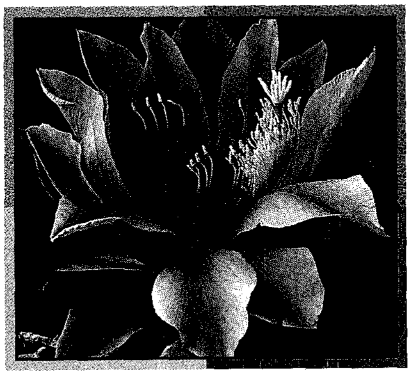


Doug Armand

Any trip to the Caribbean should include a visit to an open-air market like this one in St. George's, Grenada

civilized, but the climb to Mount Scenery, Saba's quiet volcano, still amounts to an arduous hike. St. Eustatius's sleeping volcano is the two-thousand-foot-high Quill. From the summit, paths lead down into the crater, where eighteen types of orchids grow among the ferns. Grenada's impressive network of hiking trails includes a path that leads to the Seven Sisters, a chain of waterfalls in Grand Etang National Park.

In 1902, Martinique's Mount Pelee erupted, burying the town of St. Pierre. The top of the now-serene volcano is a serious two-hour hike, and you'll need the help of one of the guides registered with the town tourist bureau. Most visitors to Venezuela get no further than the country's seventeen hundred miles of Caribbean coastline, but if you're into real climbing, hire a guide through the tourism office in Caracas and tackle the Andes Mountains.



Kurt Coste

Vibrantly colored and fragrant flowers abound

RUNNING

Ready to pick up the pace? Plan your visit to St. Lucia in January during the international 10K from Castries along the north coast road. Take a fun run with the international running club,. the Hash House Harriers, any Saturday at different locations in Barbados, or save yourself for the Run Barbados International Road Race Series, in Bridgetown, in December. Every February Puerto Rico stages its 13.1-mile San Blas Half Marathon. Each island's tourism board has information on entering the big races; your resort can get you into local events.

BIKING

Mountain bikes were made for island back roads and forest trails, as the residents of Montserrat were quick to realize. The mountains are laced with "bikeable" trails for which there are guides and maps available

Accept no substitutes.

Down in the Caribbean, all islands are *not* the same. To get the island vacation you've always dreamed about (palm trees swaying over white sugarsand beaches, luxurious resorts hidden in greenery) choose the United States Virgin Islands. *This* is as beautiful as it gets. And being part of the U.S. means no inoculations or passports or visas (but bring proof of citizenship). World-class dining and world-class shopping, too! See your travel agent or call **1-800-USVI-INFO.**

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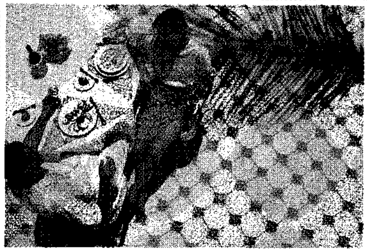

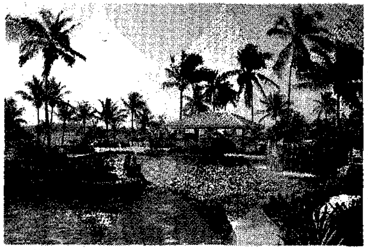

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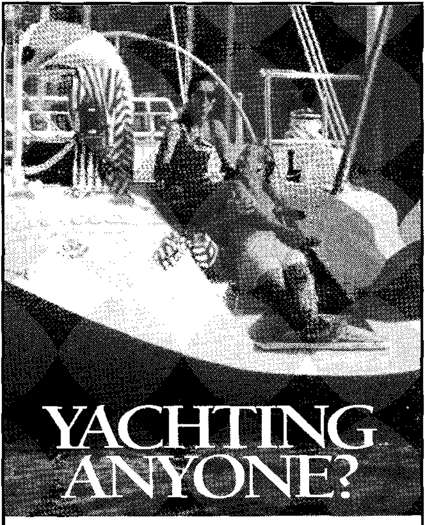

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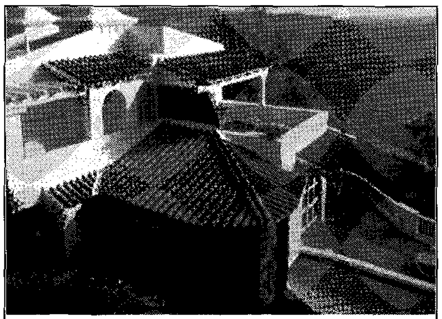

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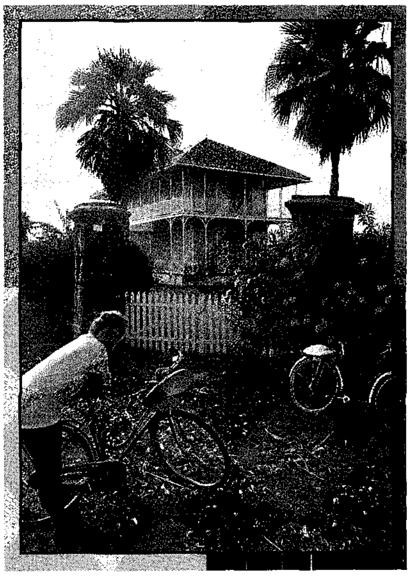
Courtesy French West Indies Tourist Board

A ride along the beach can be exhilarating

through local tourism offices, hotels, and bike-rental shops. A ten-day international race held every August in Guadeloupe has made biking a major island sport. To find out how to enter, contact the French West Indies Tourist Board in New York. Mountain biking information is available in Pointe-à-Pitre from the Association Guadeloupeenne de VTT. Velodrome cycle races and road cycling are popular in Barbados; through the local bike-rental shops it's easy to join up on a fun local ride. Other prime spots for two-wheeling are Belize, Martinique, Puerto Rico, and the Turks and Caicos.



Courtesy French West Indies Tourist Board

Biking is a great way to see Guadeloupe—or just about any Caribbean island

BIRD-WATCHING

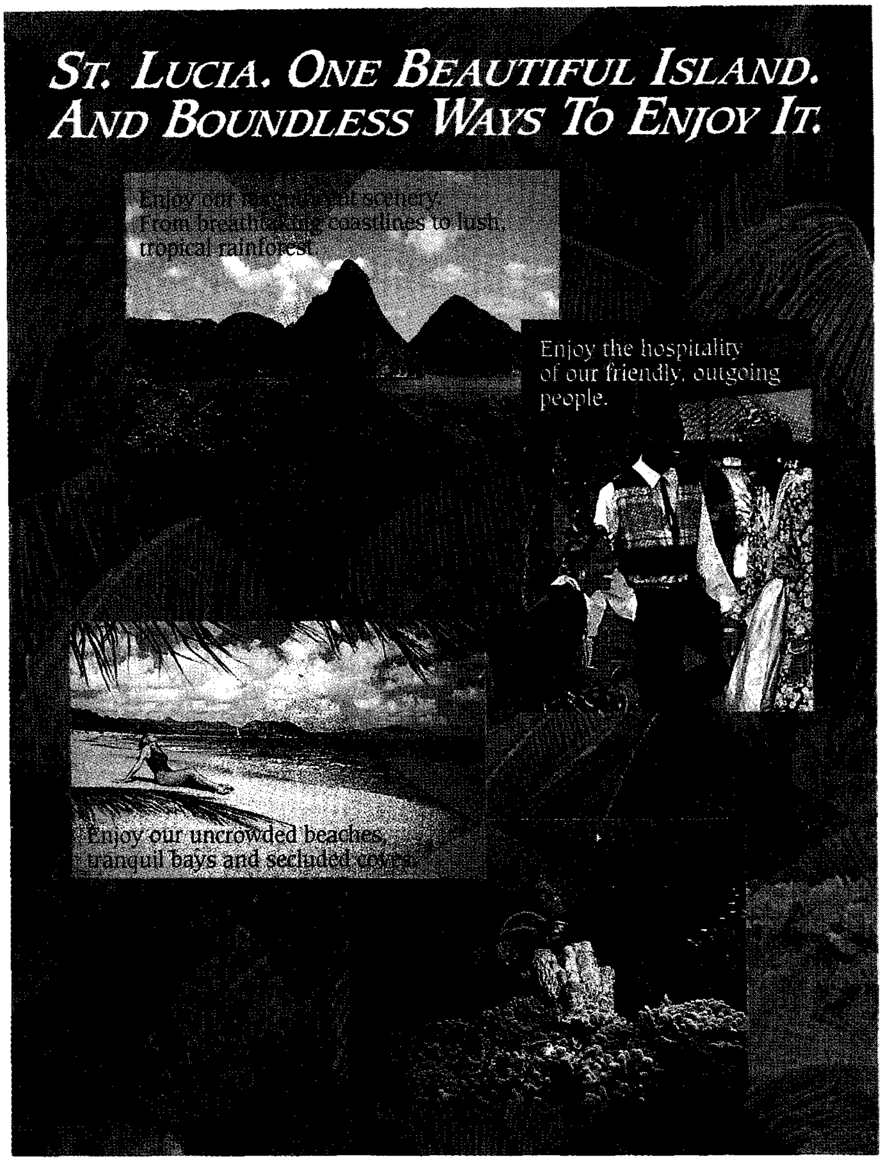
One of the best parts of a Caribbean vacation is trading the gray-and-white of winter for the Technicolor of the islands, where an eternal competition for the most brilliant hue seems to be held between the birds and the flowers. Barbuda's Frigate Bird Sanctuary, one of the world's largest, can be reached only by small wooden boat from Codrington. During the September-to-February mating season you can watch male birds inflate the crimson pouch in their throats and chests to attract females. Little Cayman's bird sanctuary is home to the largest colony of red-footed boobies in the western hemisphere, along with frigate birds, blue-winged teal, and West Indian whistling ducks, all of which can be spotted from the shore of the Rookery Lake. It's possible to see flamingos in their breeding grounds on Bonaire's Washington/Slagbaai National Park and

Bill Ivy

Rod Planck

R. Calvert

Caribbean colors: brilliant and breathtaking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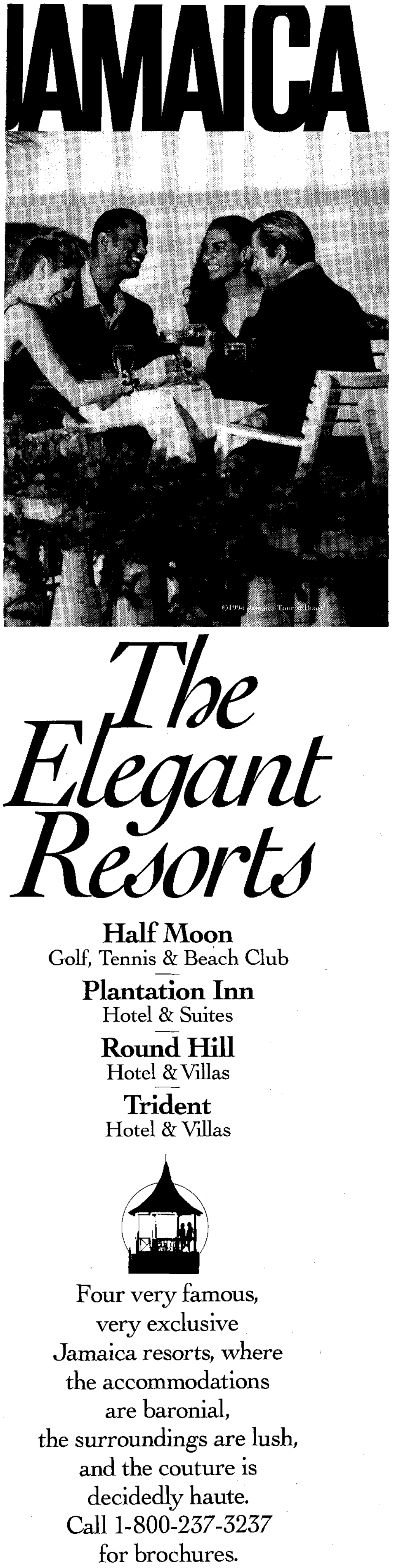

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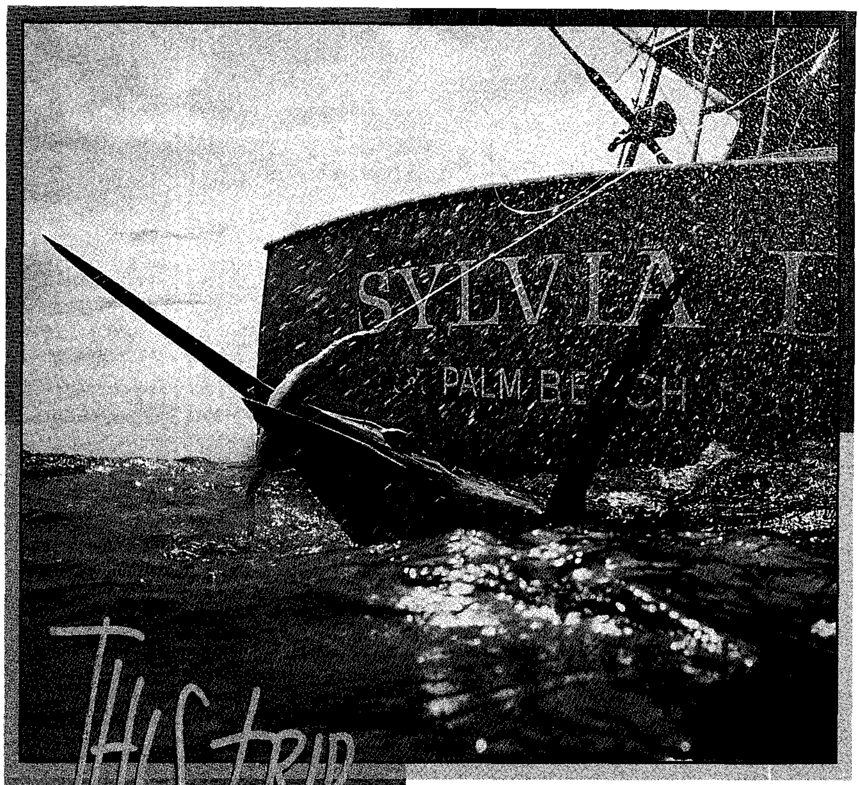

Tony Arruza

THIS TRIP, TRY SOMETHING NEW

When deep-sea fishing, nothing is as satisfying as reeling in a *big* one

North Caicos's Flamingo Pond. Wherever you go, take your bird book and binoculars; you won't be disappointed.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Horseback trekking has made the more remote Mayan ruins in Belize accessible to those not prepared (or not willing) to hike long distances through dense jungle. It's worth a few saddle sores to see this country's impressive heritage: the well-preserved ruins of elaborate ceremonial centers and massive carvings. In Jamaica, riding trails wind a scenic route from St. Ann's Bay, near Ocho Rios, to coffee plantations with guest lodgings high in the mountains. Along the way, children provide a retinue through small villages, women look up from washing clothes in a stream, men pause from the labor of shaping mahogany planks with machetes. Most Caribbean resorts can arrange beach rides for equestrians of all levels.

OTHER SPORTS

You may want to try your hand at cricket, a Caribbean obsession. Find a pick-up game, watch for awhile, then ask to join in. Polo is played and taught at Jamaica's Chukka Cove, at the St. James Polo Club, on Barbados, and at some Dominican Republic resorts. And you're in luck if you have it in mind to try your hand at a more conventional sport: there are very few islands that don't have tennis courts — and plenty of them.

If golf is your sport, then the Caribbean is the place for you. The islands have been a major golf destination since the 1950s, and new island links are being built every year. Count on spectacular views, colorful tropical foliage, emerald fairways, and challenges crafted by some of the world's top architects.

GREAT DRIVES

The road through Jamaica's Fern Gully, near Ocho Rios, follows the undulating course of an ancient river that's shadowed by more

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

FOR MORE INFORMATION

on any of these islands, contact the tourism office at the number listed below.

Anguilla [illegible]	[illegible]
Antigua [illegible]	(212) 541-4117
Aruba Tourism Authority	(800) TO-ARUBA
Bahamas Tourist Office	(800) 422-4262
Barbados Tourism Authority	(800) 221-9831
Belize Tourist Board	(800) 453-1603
Bonaire Government Tourist Office	(212) 832-0779
British Virgin Islands Tourist Board	(800) 835-8530
Cayman Islands Dept. of Tourism	(212) 682-5582
Curaçao Tourist Board	(212) 751-8266
Consulate of Dominica	(212) 599-8478
French West Indies Tourist Board	(212) 757-1125
Grenada Board of Tourism	(800) 927-9554
Guyana Consulate	(212) 527-3215
Jamaica Tourist Board	(212) 856-9727
Mexican Goverment Tourism Office	(212) 755-7261
Montserrat Tourist Information	(516) 425-0901
Puerto Rico Tourism Company	(800) 223-6530
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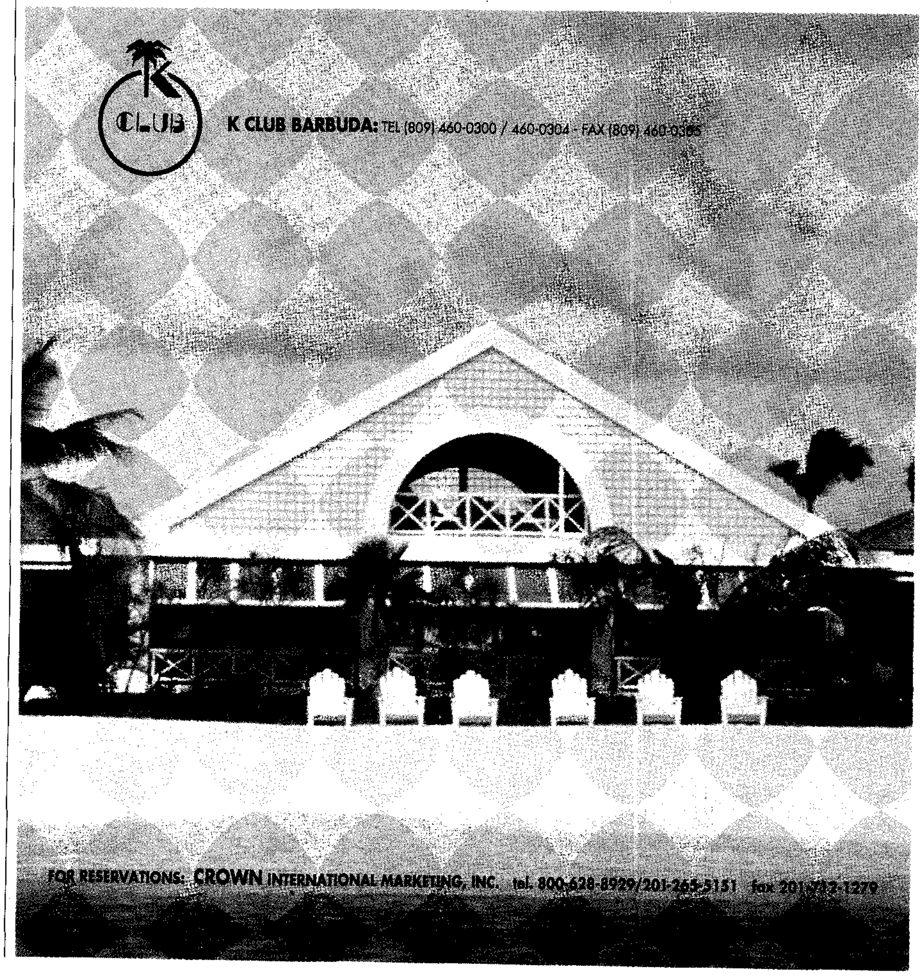

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Greg Pease

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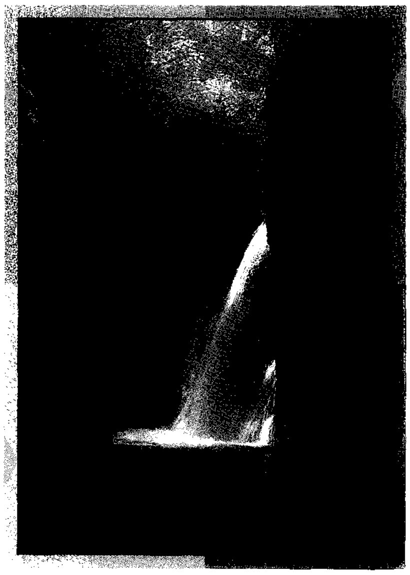

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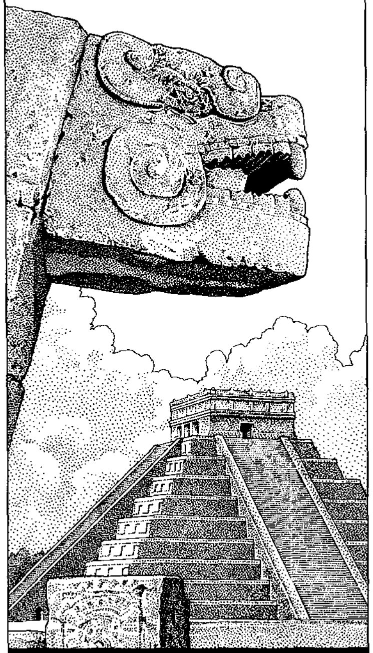
Driving through the islands reveals many treasures



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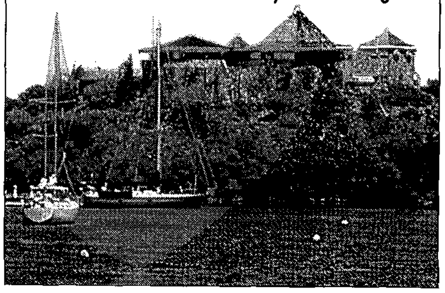

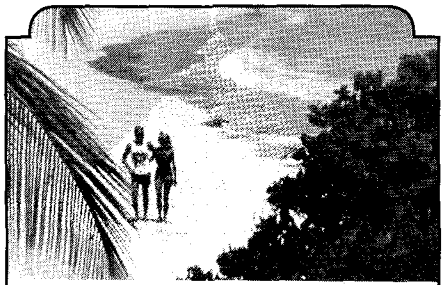

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Courtesy Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Authority

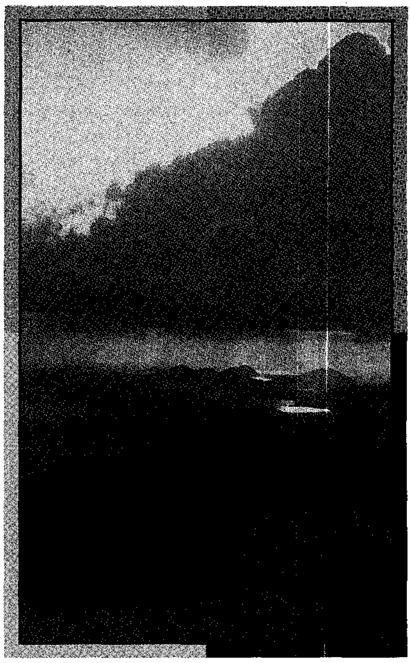
Celebrations throughout the islands are spectacular

FESTIVALS

Islanders are well aware that they live in paradise. That's why they have so many festivals to celebrate the joys of island living. In January and February, Carnival is not something you watch, it's something you see, hear, smell, and taste—something you live. During this time in Trinidad and Tobago, nothing else matters but costumes, steel-band music, dancing, parading, and partying. Bahamians welcome in the New Year with Junkanoo, a Mardi Gras-style costume parade that moves (or moo-ves) to the sounds of clanging cowbells. Even Jamaica's reclusive Maroons, descendants of fugitive slaves, put on a January fete of ceremonial drumming and dancing in Accompong. In St. Lucia, the May Jazz Festival, at Pigeon Point National Park, ushers in spring. Barbados's Crop Over, held in July, is a harvest celebration of arts, food, music, and dance.

MEMORABLE SIGHTS

When the January moon is full, you can watch thousands of Nassau groupers gather to spawn on Turneffe Reef, in Belize. From midwinter to spring, Atlantic humpback whales migrate through the waters surrounding the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, and the Turks and Caicos. Some spectators are content to watch from shore or boats, while others dive below to hear the whale songs. From March to June on St. Croix's Sandy Point National Refuge and from March to August on Trinidad's east coast and the shores of Tobago, leatherback turtles clamber up onto the beaches at night to lay their eggs. Six to eight weeks later, the little ones hatch and head for the sea.



Courtesy U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Tourism

A Caribbean sunset dazzles the eye

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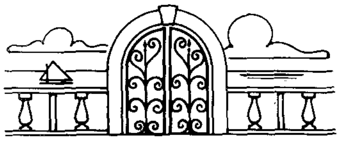

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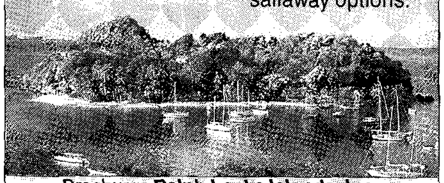

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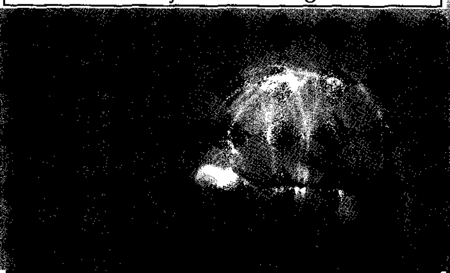

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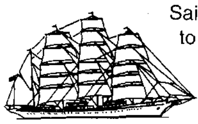

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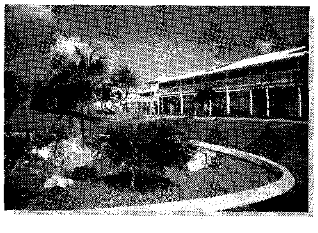

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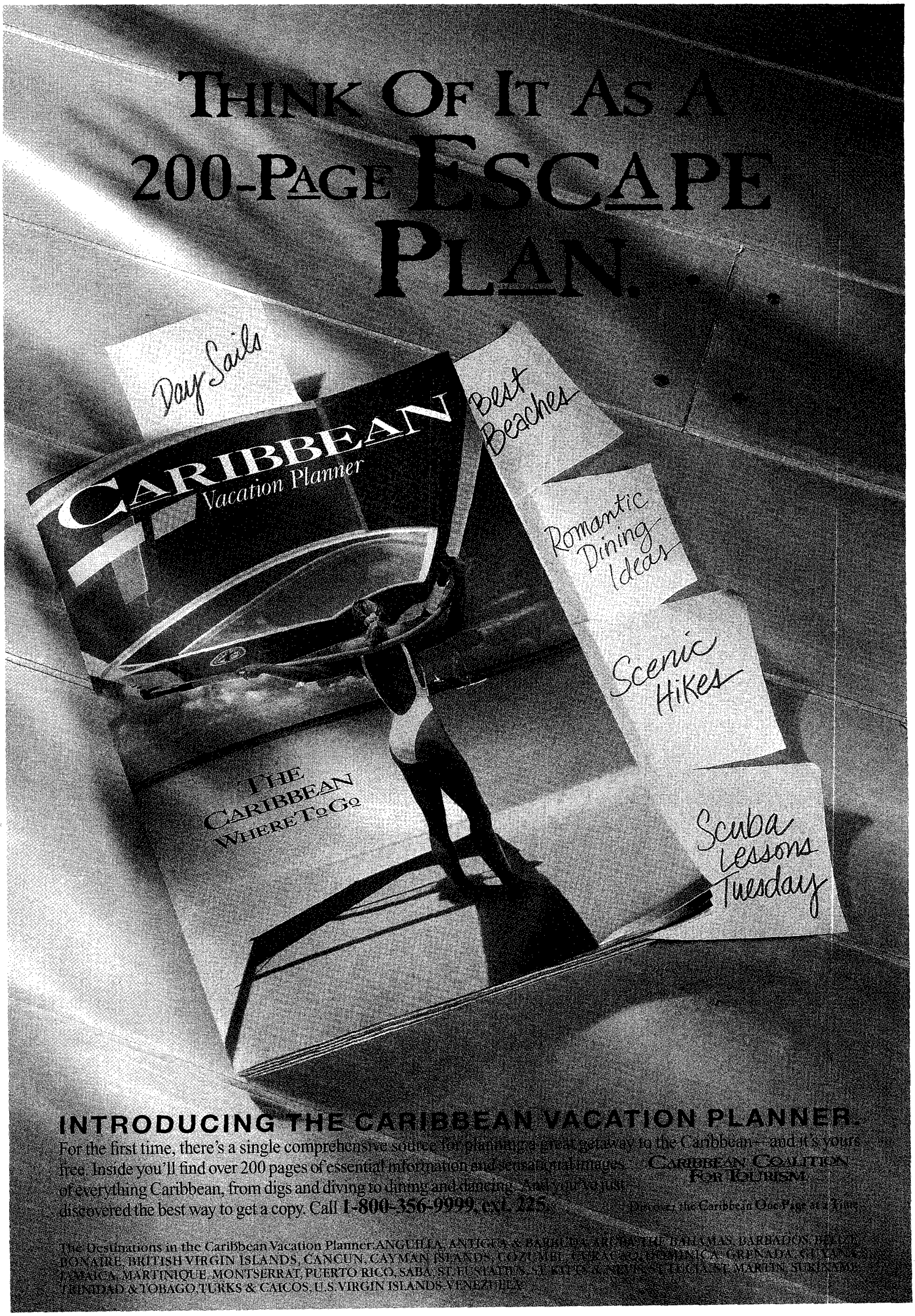
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just one exception: I could have my visa sponsor visit. Since I work for a government agency teaching English, the visa sponsor was some bureaucrat I had never met, and I certainly didn't want him to know I was infected with H.I.V.

"My doctor told me that I was in an infectious-disease ward—that in adjacent rooms were people with tuberculosis and cholera. They put a person with a compromised immune system in a ward with the world's most contagious diseases. The doctor said it was not a medical decision but an administrative one. My room had five beds; it was the male H.I.V. room. Physically, it was not clean—the bed frame next to mine was covered with dried vomit. For meals, a glass cabinet was built into the wall, and from the hallway a nurse would open a door and put the food in. Then I had to retrieve the food from the other side. Once or twice a day, a nurse came in to check my vital signs, and she wore a mask, gloves, a surgical cap, and a disposable covering over her uniform. I never saw her face. For the first and only time in my life, I considered suicide. I understand that some changes came about last year after I gave an interview to a Japanese magazine."

After considerable negotiation, Komagome Hospital granted me permission to visit, with the ground rule that I talk to no one except the doctor taking me on the tour—Dr. Tsuyoshi Yamaguchi, the head of the hospital's department of infectious diseases. I met him in a conference room that doubled as storage space; on the table between us was an ashtray piled high with cigarette butts. When we went to the AIDS floor—the ward had grown from one big room into a series of rooms, and all of them now appeared to be clean—I saw the cabinet that Berner had talked about and the telephone-television hookup in the lounge. But Dr. Yamaguchi denied that AIDS patients had ever been confined to their rooms, and that partners had ever been forbidden to visit.

I also talked with a nurse from Komagome's AIDS ward, but under circumstances that allowed her to speak freely. We met in a hotel coffee shop, and she told me, "I've come here today without telling anyone, because we're under pressure not to talk to outsiders. The policy of the hospital is to hide everything under the guise of protecting privacy." She confirmed much of Berner's account, including the fact that changes had come to Komagome recently, however reluctantly.

The nurse told me that when an AIDS patient died the hospital kept the cause of death secret. "The death certificates never say the patient died of AIDS," she said. "The family has to take the death certificate to the Tokyo municipal government to register the death, so the government workers would know. The family is worried that other family members will be barred from marriage, or that the children of the AIDS patient could never get married. So the death certificates usually give the cause as something like 'heart failure.' "

AIDS advocates can think of only eight hospitals in all of Japan—six of them in Tokyo and two in nearby Yokohama—that have "come out" and admitted publicly that they treat AIDS patients. A few hospitals—even though they often have no doctors knowledgeable about AIDS on their staffs—will accept them secretly, but many send AIDS patients to Tokyo. "Many hospitals reject AIDS patients and try to confine them to Komagome," Dr. Shun'chi Fukuhara, an assistant medical professor who trained in San Francisco, told me. "AIDS is treated like leprosy."

Teishiro Minami, of AIDS Action, said that many doctors, particularly outside Tokyo, reject people who are H.I.V.-positive, and often refuse even to refer them to anyone else. In my interviews with people infected with H.I.V., I heard several chilling stories about medical treatment. Lawrence Berner told me what happened to him after he tested positive: "I went to my regular doctor, who was American-trained. He just panicked, and said, 'I can't see you anymore.' I paid my bill and walked out past the consulting room, and I saw the doctor and nurse busy sponging off the chair where I had sat and a desk that I had touched."

Toshihiro Oishi, a twenty-five-year-old legal assistant who is infected with the virus but is so far asymptomatic, said, "Doctors who will treat H.I.V.-positives have so many patients that I can only see a doctor once every month or two for five minutes. Unless I ask, he won't discuss medications with me. Every two or three months, he does tests, but he doesn't explain what the results mean." Oishi, who, along with Berner,

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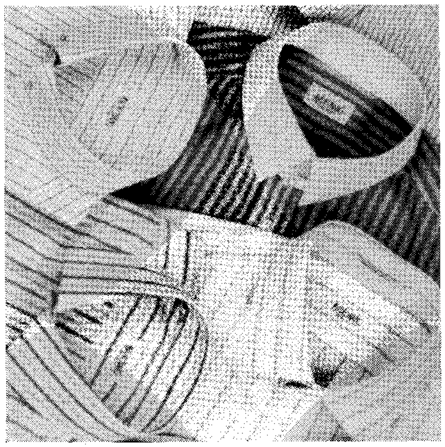

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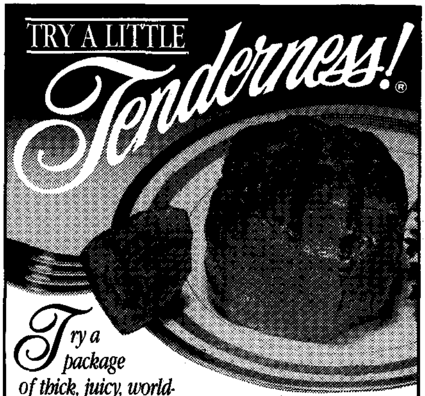

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was one of the five H.I.V.-positive people in Japan to have identified themselves publicly, said, "No information can be exchanged, because almost all the H.I.V.-positives are hiding. Everyone sees a doctor for a few minutes a month, but no one knows what is happening. I want a doctor willing to discuss medication and which treatment is best, but I haven't found anyone like that yet."

This reluctance of doctors to communicate frankly—Japanese patients generally get pills in bottles with no names on them, and are given instructions like "Take a white and a pink pill once a day"—can have disastrous consequences. In a policy similar to one that was often followed in America decades ago, many doctors in Japan won't tell patients that they have serious diseases, like cancer, even if patients ask directly. Some do the same with H.I.V. infection. Tsutomu Shimizu, a lawyer who represents several AIDS patients, told me about "a young couple in their twenties," saying, "They lived outside of Tokyo, but I can't identify them further. The husband, a hemophiliac, was H.I.V.-positive, but he wasn't told. He got married, transmitted the virus to his wife, and found out about it only when his wife got very ill. She went into the hospital in 1989 and died a month later. He's still alive, but in the hospital."

Like some of the hospitals, the government of Japan is slowly moving toward confronting the problem of AIDS. Between 1992 and 1993, the Health Ministry increased its AIDS budget fivefold, but the sum allocated for 1994, a hundred and eight million dollars, is still smaller than Thailand's expenditures—though Thailand has a population of less than fifty-eight million to Japan's hundred and twenty-five million—and is less than three per cent of the amount spent by the United States. The fact that the International Conference on AIDS was held in Yokohama in August might also help change attitudes. Four years ago, the organizers of the conference, fearing an explosion of AIDS in Asia, had proposed to Japan that the meeting be held there, and the government—confounding many of its critics—had accepted. Now these critics are hoping that the publicity generated by the conference will spur the government to further action and lessen prejudice against AIDS victims.

Whatever happens, the Japanese government must live down some questionable past practices. The Health Ministry's advisory board on AIDS includes no gays or hemophiliacs. In 1992, the AIDS Prevention Foundation, sponsored and funded by the government, distributed a comic book that contained suggestions for fighting AIDS, but withdrew it after protests. The comic book described Thailand as "a first-class AIDS superpower," and suggested that Japanese might want to avoid a trip to Germany, because it has been "infested with homosexuals since ancient times."

DAISUKE SAKAMOTO is not the real name of a young man I talked with in Tokyo recently, and he has been shown on television only from the neck down. When we met, at an expensive hotel near Shinjuku Station, he wouldn't tell me what city he had come from, for fear someone from the area would eventually read this article, start spreading rumors, and bring disgrace on his mother. Nevertheless, by Japanese standards, Sakamoto has been unusually courageous. Last year, he sued his former employer, a computer company, for firing him because he was H.I.V.-positive.

Sakamoto's lawsuit, which is still pending, is for now the only one of its kind in Japan. "Normally, they force the person into quitting the job instead of firing him," Tsutomu Shimizu, his lawyer, explained a couple of days later. "Companies in some cases pay employees with H.I.V. to leave, telling them that if they stayed and their colleagues found out, the colleagues would make their life difficult."

Wearing jeans and a red sweatshirt, and with his hair tinted reddish-brown on top—a style fashionable among adventuresome Japanese young people—Sakamoto looked much younger than his age, which is thirty-four. So far, he is in good health.

"In the fall of 1992, I was sent to work at the company's subsidiary in Thailand," he began. "To get a work permit in Thailand, you need a physical exam but no H.I.V. test. But the Thai doctor did the H.I.V. test anyway, and told the company the result without telling me. Several days later, I got a fax from headquarters in Japan saying they had emergency business and

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asking me to come back immediately.

"After I arrived in Japan, I phoned the company's president and asked when I should come to the office. 'You're a carrier,' he said. I asked, 'What do you mean?' He said, 'You're an AIDS carrier.' He told me to take another test in Japan. The day the hospital confirmed I was H.I.V.-positive, I got a registered letter from the company telling me I was fired. The letter said they were firing me because I refused to go to Thailand to work. I had already worked a week in Thailand, and my belongings were there. I never got back to Thailand; they shipped my stuff to Japan."

Sakamoto, whose father is dead, moved in with his mother and younger sister. Without consulting him, a friend of his had already told his family that he was gay and was infected with H.I.V. "They were crying and screaming," Sakamoto said. "They thought that once you got this disease you'd die immediately."

Although his family hasn't rejected him, Sakamoto plans to leave Japan for Thailand, even though this means giving up his national medical insurance. "Japan is a very closed society," he said. "In America, people work together even if they're different. In Japan, unless you're the same as the rest of the Japanese, you cannot live. I can live happily in Thailand. I have a Thai friend who wants us to start a business together. In Thailand, there isn't discrimination against people with H.I.V., and there are volunteer groups who will take care of me."

I asked Sakamoto why he had decided to leave his family, even though, unlike many other families in Japan, they're being supportive. "I don't want to cause trouble for my mother and sister," he explained. "The housewives and elderly people in the neighborhood would see me during the day and say, 'He used to be working—why isn't he working now?' They knew I went to Thailand to work, and Thailand has the image in Japan of an AIDS country, so they would guess. The neighbors would greet my mother and sister in a cold way. I don't want them to be isolated from their neighbors."

Sakamoto looked down at the table. "I told my mother and sister I'm going to leave by the end of this year, and they told me that that was best. I am a family burden." ♦

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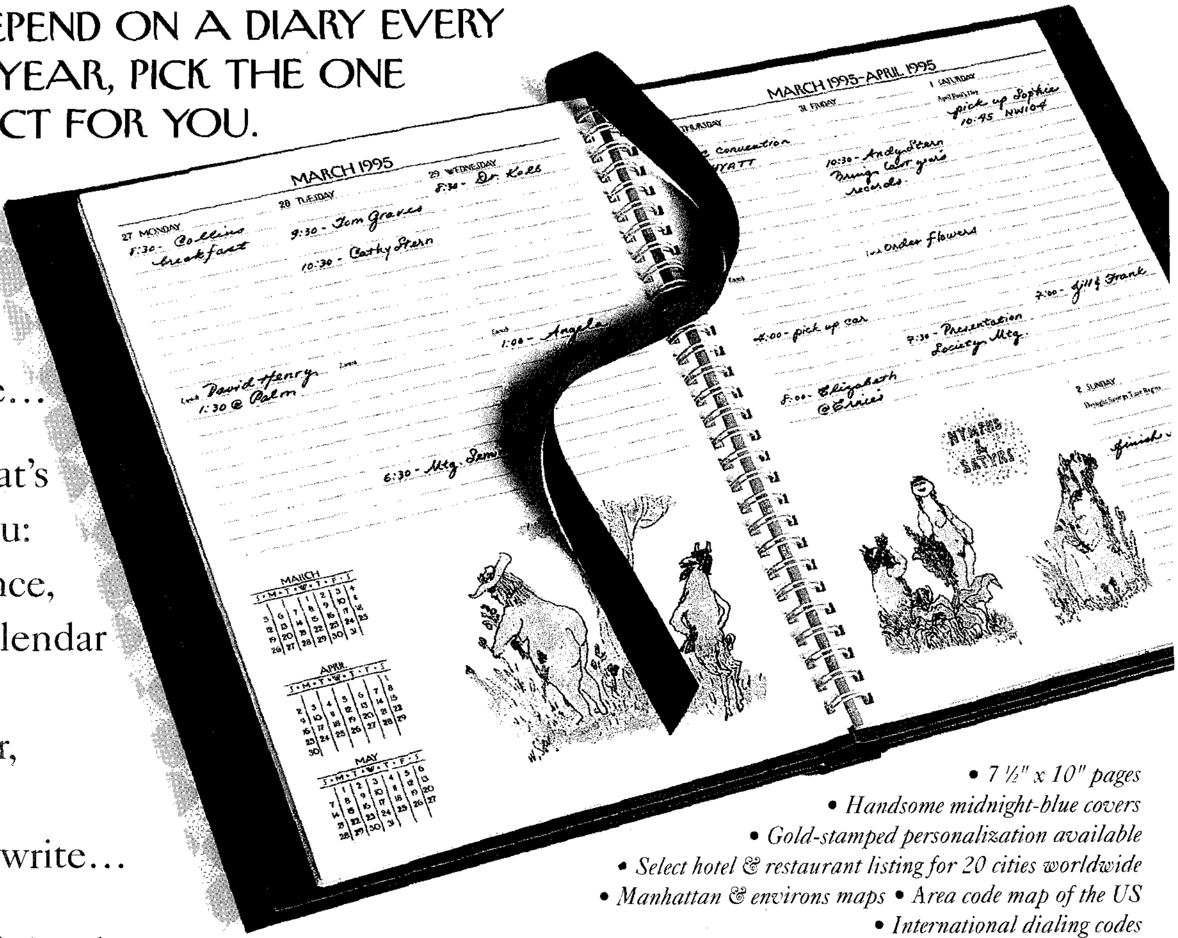
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27 MONDAY
7:30 - Collins breakfast
28 TUESDAY
9:30 - Tom Graves
10:30 - Cathy Stern
29 WEDNESDAY
8:30 - Dr. Kolb
David Henry 1:30 @ Palm
1:00 - Angela
6:30 - Mtg. Sam
MARCH 1995-APRIL 1995
Convention HYATT
31 FRIDAY
10:30 - Andy Stern
1 SATURDAY
pick up Sophie 10:45 NW104
Order flowers
4:00 - pick up car
7:30 - Presentation Society Mtg.
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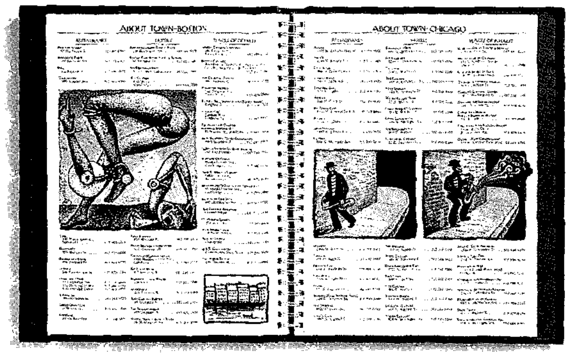
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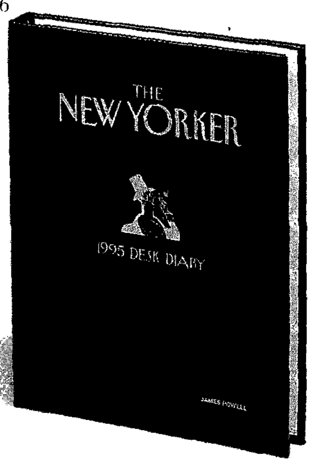
THE NEW YORKER
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JAMES POWELL

ANNALS OF RELIGION

O GURU, GURU, GURU

The spiritual movement known as SYDA *boasts a glittering clientele and a multimillion-dollar Catskills retreat. But behind all the serenity lie some uncomfortable, ill-kept secrets—and a less than blissful struggle about succession.*

BY LIS HARRIS

On a damp day last fall, some three thousand people from all over the world gathered in a huge glass-and-marble pavilion in a run-down pocket of the Catskill Mountains to chant, meditate, and dance in rapt circles under the beneficent eye of their revered teacher and spiritual guide, Gurumayi Chidvilasananda. The singsong Sanskrit chanting, the saris of the (mostly Western) women devotees, and the thick, sweet scent of incense lent the scene a hint of the sixties and early seventies. Gurumayi, as she is usually referred to, is a beautiful, energetic thirty-nine-year-old Indian woman who was named by the Honolulu-based monthly magazine *Hinduism Today* as one of the ten most influential international Hindu leaders of the last decade. She is the spiritual head of the Siddha Yoga Dham (or Home of Siddha Yoga) of America Foundation, known by the acronym SYDA—the dominant American arm of a thriving organization that maintains five hundred and fifty meditation centers and ten ashrams scattered around the world. In one way or another, tens of thousands of people, ranging from live-in devotees to occasional visitors and meditators, are involved in SYDA's activities. Its five-hundred-and-fifty-acre Catskill ashram, near the village of South Fallsburg, New York, serves as its headquarters. At South Fallsburg, photographs of the guru—with her thousand-watt smile, wide eyes, and elegantly chiselled cheekbones—adorn nearly every wall, cash register, shop counter, and shelf, as well as her devotees' private meditation altars and many of their car dashboards. There are also plenty of photographs of SYDA's founder and Gurumayi's predecessor, Swami Muktananda Paramahamsa. Swami Muktananda, who died in October, 1982, at the age of seventy-four, was one of the most prominent of the numerous Indian spiritual teachers who flourished in the United States two decades ago. Devotees still refer to him by the honorific nickname Baba, or Father.

South Fallsburg started out, in 1976, as a modest operation run out of the rented rooms of an old hotel; its sprawling complex now has an estimated market value of fifteen to seventeen million dollars. Muktananda disapproved of loans and debt, and SYDA reportedly paid mostly in cash for three dilapidated prewar Catskill hotels—the Brickman, Gilbert's, and the Windsor. They have now been sleekly modernized, in country-club-glitz style, as Anugraha (Descent of Grace), Sadhana Kutir (House of Spiritual Practices), and Atma Nidhi (Treasure of the Self). Around the ashram's main building, the neatly landscaped grounds are scattered with Disneyesque painted-plaster likenesses of Indian gods, reflecting the scope of the Hindu pantheon.

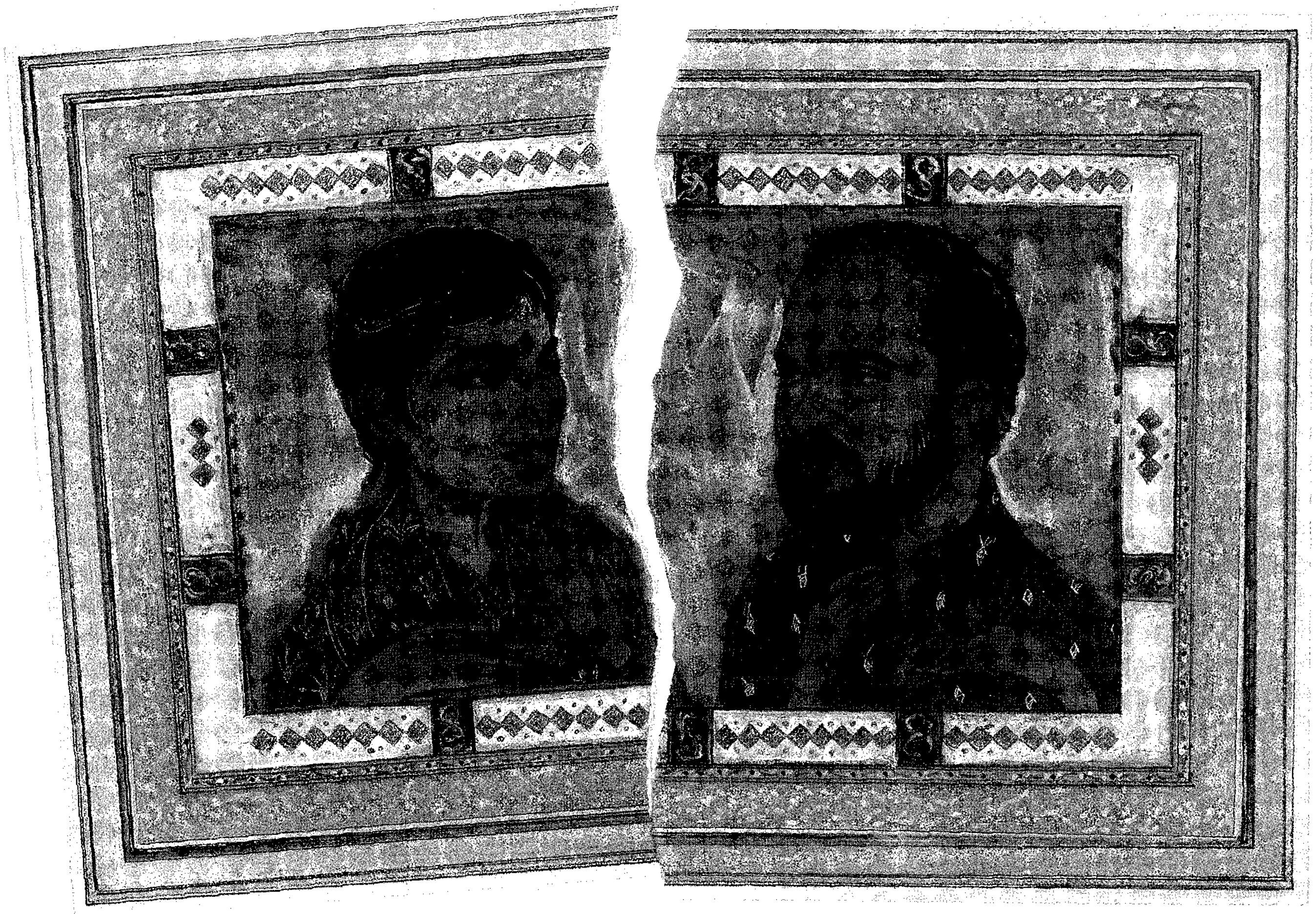
Nobody knows how rich SYDA is: as a nonprofit religious organization, it is not required to declare its income or pay property taxes. Most of the devotees who work at the ashrams are unpaid; many pay rent to live there. During a summer weekend, several thousand people may visit the South Fallsburg ashram, and SYDA can raise more than a million dollars from the sale of food, books, tapes, and memorabilia and from "intensives"—a type of spiritual initiation program, usually lasting two days and costing four hundred dollars. (The intensives follow a format similar to that of many self-help programs of the seventies and early eighties, especially the est program, a profitable self-help movement founded by Muktananda's friend Werner Erhard.) Some years, intensives are held all summer long. In 1989, revenue from the South Fallsburg bookstore alone was well over four million dollars.

Over the years, SYDA has attracted a number of well-known admirers, including Jerry Brown, John Denver, André Gregory, Diana Ross, Isabella Rossellini, Phylicia Rashad, Don Johnson, Melanie Griffith, and Marsha Mason. Most of Gurumayi's followers are college-educated people, who may have been attracted to meditation for spiritual reasons but are just as likely to have sought out one of her ashrams for the psychological and health benefits that the meditative process is said to confer. The pop-culture image of the ashram visitor as dazed flower child or potential Manson groupie is outdated. Long after the Beatles took off their kurtas, and the last string of love beads was tossed in the trash, many serious students of Eastern meditation in this country continued to find in the practice riches that had eluded them in the mainstream religions of the West. Doctors, lawyers, artists, businesspeople, and religious leaders of many denominations are among the five million or so Americans who practice yoga, and many of them can be found on what is sometimes called the New Age religion scene—a peculiar name, really, since the traditions these groups draw from are among the oldest in the world.

The occasion for the gathering that fall morning was the last day of a *yajña* (pronounced "yagnya"), an ancient Vedic fire ceremony, which was presided over by sixteen Brahman priests who had been flown from India to South Fallsburg to help commemorate the eleventh anniversary of Swami Muktananda's death. The *yajña* was held in the pavilion, which has blue neon-lighted pillars that make it look (especially at night) like a cross between a mother spaceship and a small sports stadium. Kathy Nash, the SYDA spokesperson, a chipper woman with light-brown hair who used to work as an anchor for a Monterey, California, TV station, steered me to a cushion on the women's side of the pavilion. (Men and women traditionally sit apart in ashrams.) The sixteen orange-robed priests, who all week had been chanting and casting offerings of food, spices, and flowers into a blazing fire sunk into the pavilion floor, were being garlanded and enfolded in long shawls as a gesture of thanks. About fifty feet from the firepit sat a red-robed figure wearing a raffish-looking, high-crowned, unadorned red hat, whom I took at first to be a beautiful boy, perhaps an acolyte. But when the figure's face appeared, hugely magnified, on two closed-circuit screens suspended from the ceiling, I could see that I had in fact been looking at the startlingly glamorous Gurumayi.

Gurumayi remained a distant presence, but that evening I was introduced to her at darshan—a ritual in which devotees and visitors receive a blessing from the guru in the form of a tap on the head with a wand of peacock feathers. Sitting on a throne, she beamed her powerful smile at me, tapped me with the feathers, and gave me a frank once-over, followed by another generous blast of smile. A nimbus of electricity seemed to surround her. She asked me if I had seen the *yajña* ceremony. I said I'd caught only a bit of it at the end, because I'd lost my reading glasses earlier, and that had delayed my arrival. "You think so much," she said, smiling again.

I nodded, though I had no idea what she meant. Then, sensing impatience in the long line behind me, I started to edge sidewise, away from the throne. I was detained by a regal movement of the guru's hand as she signalled to a young attendant on the floor beside her. The attendant quickly rose and draped a garland of gardenias around my neck.



TIM BOWER

The swami's heirs: Gurumayi and her younger brother Nityananda became joint successors to the SYDA movement in 1982. His mysterious stepping down three years later is one of the many controversies surrounding SYDA.

SEVERAL months later, at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, a rather less beatific scene unfolded. On the evening of February 1, 1994, a car pulled up to the Lufthansa section of the international terminal, and a tall, bearded, powerfully built Indian in his early thirties got out. He was dressed in a swami's traditional orange robe, and he was accompanied by two women, both Western in appearance. As the three were making their way to the terminal, five men, waiting at the curb, approached them menacingly and began shouting. "We're going to follow you everywhere!" one of them yelled. "You're dragging Baba's name in the mud!"

The main object of this attention, the man in the orange robe, was the younger brother of Gurumayi. Born Subhash Shetty, in Bombay, he had, like his sister, been given a new name—Nityananda. Like Gurumayi, Nityananda is a meditation teacher with an ashram (though a tiny one) in the Catskills. And, like her, he claims to be an inheritor of Swami Muktananda's spiritual mantle. Indeed, Muktananda had named him his sole successor in July of 1981, and about a year later, a few months before he died, changed the decree to name him and his sister his official co-successors. But Nityananda stepped down under mysteri-

Victoria Roberts

"Charles, would you be my vintner?"

• •

ous circumstances in 1985, and today his picture is conspicuously absent at SYDA ashrams. The women accompanying him, Inge Fichelmann and Kimberly Cable, who use the Sanskrit names Nirguna and Devayani respectively, were his principal assistants.

The five men doing the shouting were all known to Nityananda, and all were active devotees of Gurumayi. Among them was a member of SYDA's three-person Executive Management Council, which oversees the day-to-day running of the South Fallsburg ashram. According to Nirguna, another of the men, a longtime devotee named Ganesh Irelan, put his face right up to Nityananda's and said loudly, "I'm going to follow you till the day you die!" Devayani ran inside to the ticket counter to call for the police, but by the time they arrived the men had been chased away from the Lufthansa ticketing area by an airport security guard. The guard, Joseph Mee, later told me that he'd never seen anything quite like the scene that followed. Lufthansa stowed Nityananda and Devayani, who were scheduled to depart for Germany on the first leg of a trip to India, in the first-class lounge, though they weren't travelling first class. When the flight was announced, Mee and other guards formed a human wall around them and started walking them to the departure gate. But the five men had managed to slip through an unguarded door to the departure area. "They all looked the same, to put it bluntly. They looked like clones," Mee said. "They were saying that he was a cult figure . . . and meantime they're acting like complete fools." Nityananda and Devayani managed to board the plane—but not before being followed to the boarding gate by the five men, who, Mee added, had to be "pushed aside" to clear the way.

This incident, with its mixture of slapstick and menace, is only one of the more recent in a long series of curious and sometimes disturbing events, and it is a reminder that behind the vision of Catskill bliss lies a more complicated tale, one that traces its roots to a bitter family schism and, before that, to SYDA's founder.

SWAMI MUKTANANDA PARAMAHAMSA, Gurumayi's—and Nityananda's—predecessor, began his spiritual searchings at the age of fifteen but didn't find his own guru until he was thirty-nine, in 1947. According to SYDA's ecclesiastical constitution, "the Siddha Yoga lineage of Guru-disciple . . . goes back . . . in time thousands of years beginning with the primordial Guru, Shiva." Historically, though, Muktananda's lineage goes back no further than to his guru, Bhagawan Nityananda, an ecstatic, mostly silent renunciant who, it is said, was born a Siddha (Sanskrit for "perfected one") and claimed no physical guru of his own. Other students of Bhagawan Nityananda also claimed to be his disciples, but they attracted far fewer devotees. There have been Siddhas in India since time immemorial, and numerous other Siddha lineages are represented in India today, but none has a global following to rival SYDA's. In Siddha Yoga, a central goal is the awakening of cosmic energy, or Shakti, which is said to be coiled at the base of the spine, in a form called Kundalini, and which, when activated, manifests itself as bliss. And it is through a guru that the Shakti is awakened—by word, touch, look, or thought. As a matter of creed, this is the role that Bhagawan Nityananda played for Muktananda, and it is the role that Muktananda would play for thousands across the globe.

After coming to the United States in 1970, Muktananda travelled frequently around the world, published more than thirty books, gave lectures, and founded numerous ashrams and meditation centers. SYDA's official histories say that he believed it was his mission to create a "meditation revolution" in the West, and the hundreds of enthusiastic devotees who filled jumbo jets—chartered by SYDA—to join Baba in India on two of his "world tours" (he went on three, in the nineteen-seventies) must have seen that as a real possibility. Most of Muktananda's devotees revered him as a saint, and many students of his who shied away from that kind of vocabulary nonetheless considered him the most impressive man they had ever known. Even diehard rationalists who met him thought him a man of great charisma and charm.

Two apparently contradictory themes thread their way through Muktananda's writings. On the one hand, he urges seekers not to be too credulous or to yield too easily to the demands of the guru. "To love a Guru does not mean to follow after him saying, 'O Guru, Guru, Guru,' " he writes. On the other hand, he maintains, the only way to escape the bonds of ego is to surrender to a guru—not by worshipping his physical form but by following his path and teachings. "The Guru is absolutely necessary for one's life—as necessary as the vital force," he writes. A true guru, he adds, is "not an individual, but the divine power of grace flowing through that individual. That power is the Shakti that creates and supports the world." To sustain such awesome powers, a guru "always practices the teachings he imparts to others. He never breaks his own discipline. He follows strict celibacy." In fact, Muktananda advised his devotees to refrain from sex, too. "For meditation," he told a South Fallsburg audience in 1972, "what you need is not dollars, not eggs, not sweets, nor chocolate or cakes. What you need is this strength, this seminal vigor. Therefore I insist on total celibacy as long as you are staying in the ashram." On such bedrock principles are communities of belief grounded.

SEVERAL hundred people were living at the South Fallsburg ashram at the time of my visit, but the vast majority of Gurumayi's devotees lead conventional lives interspersed with weekend and summertime interludes at the ashram. Even for them, the power of SYDA's practices is undeniable. Some told me that the practice of Siddha Yoga had been more useful to them than therapy; some that it had helped them to reconnect with their own religions. And for others, whose involvement is less casual, it can be completely life-transforming.

One such person is Sally Kempton, a long-term American devotee of Gurumayi's. In 1974, she left a promising career as a journalist to join the ashram. Kempton, the daughter of the *Newsday* columnist Murray Kempton, had a reputation as an acerbic essayist for such publications as *Esquire* and the *Village Voice*. In April, 1976, *New York* published a piece of hers, entitled "Hanging Out with the Guru," in which she described Muktananda holding court in a mansion in Pasadena, California, in 1974, with a big crowd of people paying tribute to him with flowers and fruit as he touched their heads with a wand of peacock feathers. Dressed in his customary orange robe, ski cap, and sunglasses, the sixty-six-year-old guru seemed to her to radiate a boyish insouciance, and to be "the least spaced-out person in the room, a practical, solid presence." Kempton sat around listlessly as devotees asked questions about visionary experiences, until one woman asked a question that seemed to apply to her own life: "What do you do about negative emotions?" His answer—"Let them go"—and his subsequent elaboration of this approach to difficult problems had for her the force of a depth charge, not because of the idea, which sounded like any number of pop philosophies, but because of the spiritual authority and power she felt behind it:

> I felt as if a huge pool had opened in my heart (*Oh God,* I thought, *it's all true what those creeps were saying*), and the pool was full of soft air, and I was floating in it. It was the most intensely sensual feeling I had ever had. It felt so good that my first reaction was a sharp pang of guilt, a feeling that I had stumbled into some forbidden region, perhaps tapped a pleasure center in my brain, which would keep me hooked on bodyless sensuality, string me out on bliss until I turned into a vegetable.

Soon, she wrote, she stopped enjoying cigarettes, even though she had been a smoker since the age of thirteen and had had no particular wish to quit. She also began needing far less sleep, and she rarely got annoyed at things that would have bothered her a lot in the past. A couple of weeks after that first encounter, she was formally introduced to Muktananda, and three months after that, in Denver, she joined his tour.

The *New York* article on Muktananda was one of Kempton's last pieces as a popular-magazine writer. By the time it came out, she had joined Muktananda's entourage; she has been a full-time member of his organization ever since, and in 1982 she became a swami and was given the spiritual name Durgananda. Her defection was a minor cause célèbre in the small world of New York journalism. Ross Wetzsteon, a former editor of hers at the *Voice*, told me that he believes that her immersion in Siddha Yoga diminished her. "Sally was a wonderfully gifted writer, and when she got involved with that place she lost all her wit, all her irony, and all her perceptiveness," he said. "It was as if her brain had gone completely soft. There was a vacancy. She seemed hollow. People use the word 'brainwashed'—I know that doesn't really apply, but it was as if her center had disappeared, not got stronger."

Durgananda, who is fifty-one years old now, is a slim, fine-featured woman with cropped dark-blond hair and large, intelligent pale-blue eyes. When I met her, she was wearing a red robe and ski cap. Though she did not remotely conform to the bliss-blob image—the woman I sat with over a vegetarian Indian lunch in the ashram's snack bar had a ready laugh and a quick wit—she did talk about the guru, as do many devotees, in somewhat abstract terms. For example, she told me that a distinguishing feature of Muktananda and Gurumayi, compared with other, run-of-the-mill gurus, "is that they're *fully* enlightened. They've reached the goal."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"You know it ultimately by your experience. You know it ultimately by the state which you attain. But there are a lot of ways that you can test or that you can understand the state of the guru. One of

"Cat, anyone?"

PROGNOSIS

I walked alone in the chill of dawn
while my mind leapt, as the teachers

of detachment say, like a drunken
monkey. Then a gray shape, an owl,

passed overhead. An owl is not
like a crow. A crow makes convivial

chuckings as it flies,
but the owl flew well beyond me

before I heard it coming, and when it
settled, the bough did not sway.

—JANE KENYON

them is that a master is in a state of total equality awareness, and you see this cropping up. In other words, without being spaced-out or out of this world, they really do see everyone as equal. It's something that's so rare that we're not aware of how *much* inequality we experience. . . . Things like, you're too hot, you're too cold, you're comfortable with this, you're not comfortable with that, you want this, you don't want that. It's like the whole universe is made up of better and worse and more and less. What you find with these masters is not that they don't get cold or hot, and say, 'Turn down the heat.' It's not like that. But you see them time and time again in different situations and you see that there is this genuine unending joy and equanimity."

When I asked Durgananda a few questions about Gurumayi's routines and habits, her responses were guarded. All I could glean from them was that Gurumayi ate alone, that she had a good sense of humor, and that she thrived on helping people.

Some devotees to whom I spoke attested to life-altering visions they had had of Gurumayi—sometimes before they had even met her—or talked of prophetic dreams about her. Mainly, though, the powers attributed to Gurumayi are in the realm of helping people to feel more "centered"; her powers may also rest in an ability to attract well-educated, relatively worldly followers. Gurumayi, by all accounts, is a cool, calm, confident leader. Even so, I was firmly turned down each time I tried to find a way past the barriers around her. Her policy, I was told, was not to grant interviews to publications other than SYDA's own. By contrast, Muktananda used to give interviews liberally, even appearing on numerous TV shows (including one in Santa Monica in 1980 on which he gave the interviewer *shaktipat*, as the transmission of spiritual power from guru to disciple is called, during the commercial break), and in Gurumayi's early days as guru she herself gave several. Moreover, I found, I could never amble around the ashram's grounds on my own, or even sit in the lobby, without having a smiling man with a walkie-talkie or some soft-spoken facilitator swoop down on me. Many of my inquiries about SYDA's history seemed to be met by an air of secrecy. And after I'd had what I thought of as a private conversation with a devotee, the contents of that conversation were reported to the SYDA staff by someone who had been standing nearby. Perhaps experience had made them chary about the risks of making their affairs public.

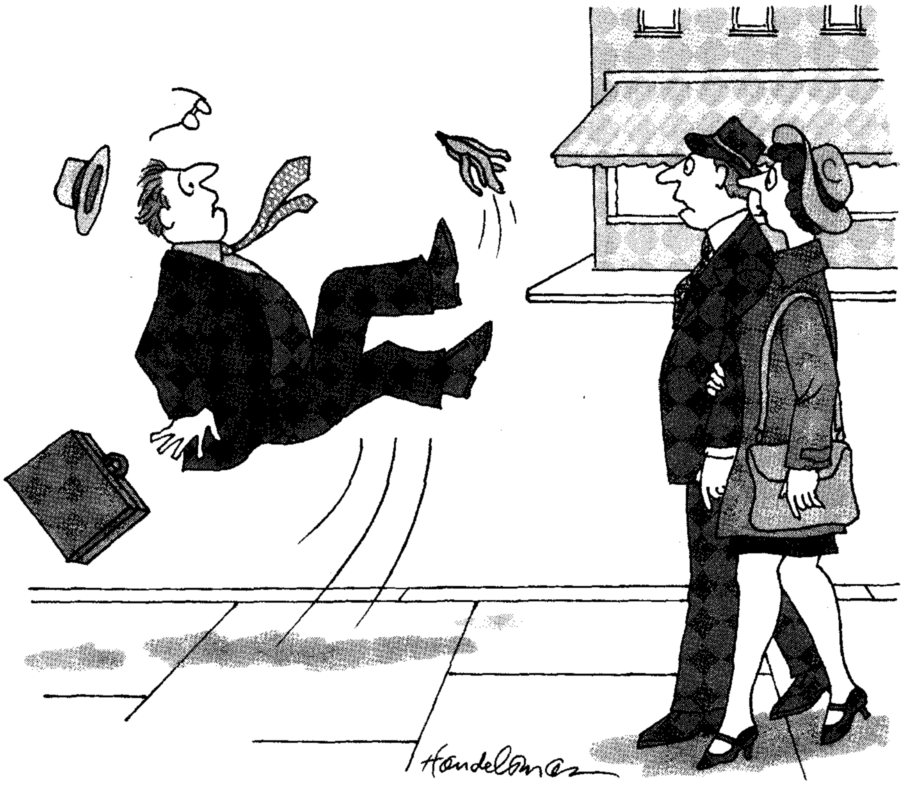
SYDA'S first taste of scandal came when, shortly before his death, Swami Muktananda was accused of failing to live up to the principles of celibacy by which he set such store. The accusations saw print in a 1983 article by William Rodarmor, published in *CoEvolution Quarterly* (now the *Whole Earth Review*). Rodarmor's article was based on twenty-five interviews with members and former members of SYDA, and it detailed sexual activities Muktananda was alleged to have engaged in with female devotees, many of them fairly young. According to the article, members of Muktananda's inner circle had overlooked his behavior, or tried to rationalize it, for years. Then, in 1981, a swami named Stan Trout publicly distributed a letter in which he accused the then seventy-three-year-old guru of betraying the trust of young ashram women and causing their families anguish by extracting sexual favors from them in the name of spiritual enlightenment. Though Trout's letter troubled many in the SYDA community and sent shock waves through the Yogic world, Muktananda chose to respond by circulating within the fold a "Message from Baba," in which he quoted from the fifteenth-century poet-saint Kabir ("The elephant strides at his own gait, but the dogs do trail behind and bark"), and by telling devotees that they "should know the truth by their own experience, not by the letters that they receive."

Ex-devotees told Rodarmor that Muktananda used a specially built table at the South Fallsburg ashram for his sexual encounters, that in India he had a habit of visiting the girls' dormitories at night, and that it was his custom to bestow gifts of money and jewelry on young women whom he summoned to his room. (If a young woman suddenly appeared wearing new jewelry, the ex-devotees said, it was understood that she had been tapped by the guru.) Michael Dinga, an Oakland contractor and a former SYDA Foundation trustee and devotee, who was in charge of construction at South Fallsburg for many years but became disillusioned and left SYDA in 1980, told Rodarmor that "it was supposed to be Muktananda's big secret, but since many of the girls were in their early to middle teens, it was hard to keep it secret."

Investigating these claims, I tracked down approximately a hundred ex-devotees, ex-trustees, and ex-swamis, all but a handful of whom either so feared reprisals from SYDA or were so anxious not to be entangled with the organization that they would talk to me only if I promised not to use their names. A great number believed that the allegations about Muktananda's behavior were true, and found it hard to believe that Gurumayi could not be aware of it. A few former devotees told me that many people considered it a signal honor to have been tapped by the guru; one said those who had long-term relationships with him were known as his "queens," though some families and guardians of the young women sexually involved with him had become very upset. Several people pointed out to me that, whatever had happened, it was in a context of reverence so great that devotees used to drink Muktananda's bathwater and worship the trimmings from his haircuts, just as, soon enough, Gurumayi's attendants would vie to sit in her dirty bathwater.

"A Siddha master can juice up the Shakti with sex," one longtime devotee who left SYDA in the mid-eighties told me. In his book "Where Are You Going?" Muktananda writes, "It is through the power of the upward-flowing sexual fluid" that the guru "is able to give Shaktipat." In context, this appears to be part of an argument for celibacy. But it may shed light on a detail common to all accounts of sexual encounters with Muktananda: that he did not ejaculate. Two women I talked with who were in their twenties when Muktananda approached them said that they had considered their experience to be "loving," and that it was "not exactly sex." What, exactly, was meant by "not exactly sex" was clarified by another ex-devotee, a writer, who sent me an unpublished account of what she described as a sexual encounter she had at the age of twenty-six with the then seventy-one-year-old Muktananda. After talking to her for a while in his room one evening about the power of Kundalini, she reports, Muktananda told her that "the pleasure we gain out of having sex also has a higher counterpart." Her account continued:

> He told me that when the Kundalini is fully realized, the body exists in a state of permanent ecstacy. "It ever changes and is ever new."
>
> He asked me to lie down on a table. He stood close to me and placed himself inside of me. We stayed for about one and a half hours in that position. During that whole period he never had an erection or ejaculation. He never even moved. We talked all the time. He joked a lot, and told me stories about his childhood. At a certain moment he said: "Whatever happens now cannot be understood with the mind. Don't think about it a lot. This is just happening, that is all. Just know that this is the greatest day of your life."
>
> It was a very extraordinary experience. And he was right, I could never understand with my mind what happened that evening. All I know was that I was in a state of total ecstacy, and whatever happened had nothing to do with sex.



"I blame the Clinton Administration."

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In a letter that the woman sent me not long ago, she urged me to view her experience, as she has, in a context of moral relativism. "The beautiful example that the (true) Siddhas give us, which always touches me so deeply, is their quality of non-judgment and total acceptance," she wrote, and added, "The Grace of a Guru like Baba is something very mysterious."

Muktananda may well have considered his sexual encounters in a similar light, and his wish, however hypocritical, to conceal them from public view, and even from the majority of his own followers, may have been a matter of public relations. A good number of those I spoke with, though they were troubled by his double life, found spiritual explanations for his behavior. Few considered the time they had spent with Muktananda to have been mainly a destructive experience, or felt that his sexual activities negated the spiritual gifts he had given them. Some speculated that the sexual activity might be construed as goddess worship; others pointed to precedents in Yogic history where sainted masters flouted conventional mores because they themselves lived on a more esoteric plane. Two people suggested that Muktananda's alleged preference for very young women, whom he was said to have regularly chosen from a six-bed dormitory known as the Princess Dorm, bespoke a need to borrow "extra energy" from them after he had suffered three heart attacks. Finally, some devotees have speculated that Muktananda was actually conducting Tantric spiritual initiations. (The Tantra tradition is derived from a number of sixth-to-twelfth-century mystical Hindu and Buddhist scriptures that describe a range of practices—including a form of sexual congress in which ejaculation is controlled—for attaining exalted states of awareness and enlightenment.) But the Tantric scholars I spoke to dismissed such explanations. "This kind of behavior should not be legitimized by calling it Tantra," Robert Thurman, the chairman of the Department of Religion at Columbia, told me. "The occasional shocking incident, even in legends, demonstrates exactly the degree to which such behavior stands against the tradition."

The closest Muktananda ever came to explaining his behavior, some say, was in the oblique form of a talk given by Pratap Yande, a longtime Indian devotee, shortly before the guru's death and published after it, in the October, 1982, issue of *Siddha Path*, the sect's monthly magazine. The talk, entitled "Never Go Too Close to a Saint," was about a great seventeenth-century saint named Ranganath, who lived his youth as an ascetic but at a certain point had a vision instructing him to accept the worldly things he might be offered. By and by, the vision came true, and he was given a beautiful horse, servants, and elegant clothes, and proceeded to live in a luxurious way, which many people around him found "confusing." One day, the story goes, a pious king came upon Ranganath (who was still supposed to be a renunciant) lying in bed with two beautiful women who were massaging his feet. When the king saw Ranganath thus disporting himself, "a little doubt about his saintliness" entered his mind. Sensing this, Ranganath dismissed the women, called for a silver bucket, "closed the door, and in the presence of the king he ejaculated his seminal fluid into the bucket, filling it to the brim." Shortly thereafter, calling upon an esoteric Yogic practice called *mahavajroli mudra*, "he reabsorbed all of the semen within himself and went back to sleep," and the two women returned and continued their foot therapy. The moral of the story: "It is impossible to understand a Siddha."

As it was, there remained some devotees who could not accept a spiritual explanation of any sort, and reluctantly concluded that, though Muktananda's spiritual power was undeniable, their teacher was neither as enlightened nor as infallible as they had believed; still others felt revulsion and shock when they learned of his behavior. Scores of active devotees eventually left SYDA after hearing about the allegations against Muktananda; some never resumed their practices. "My personal opinion is that it's not O.K., regardless of whether it's a time-honored tradition," I was told by a female ex-devotee who had spent much of an anguished year trying to find a satisfactory explanation of the whole business. "It *was* sex and it *was* abuse." The same woman, who had been a member of SYDA's inner circle, was informed that she was unwelcome at the ashram after she found that she couldn't deal with Muktananda's alleged sexual activities; she told Durgananda that she was leaving because of issues of personal integrity. "And what she said—I'll never forget it—was 'Well, you have the luxury of integrity. People who are committed don't have that luxury.' It just raised the hair on the back of my neck." Durgananda says that she does not remember making this remark.

SYDA has steadfastly stuck to the position that Muktananda never strayed from celibacy, and its swamis have taken pains to teach ways of handling questions about the issue in role-playing training sessions with its meditation teachers. One American swami to whom I spoke—Kripananda, an ex-college professor who had lived and travelled extensively with Muktananda—vigorously denied every allegation. Kripananda said that at SYDA's Indian ashram, in Ganeshpuri, about fifty miles from Bombay, her room was adjacent to the stairs between the girls' dormitory, above, and Muktananda's room, directly below. The walls and floors were so thin that she could hear him sneeze or cough, and she had never heard anything suspicious. Nor did any of the girls complain to her about sexual molestation, she said, though they constantly came to her with their problems.

Durgananda called the accusations "laughable" and "ridiculous." Had they been true, she said, Muktananda would not have been able to go on giving *shaktipat* and the organization would not have continued to be as healthy as it was. Recently, however, I spoke with two long-time SYDA meditation teachers with well-established academic and professional careers as psychotherapists, who say that Durgananda sounded a different note with them. They told me that last winter they

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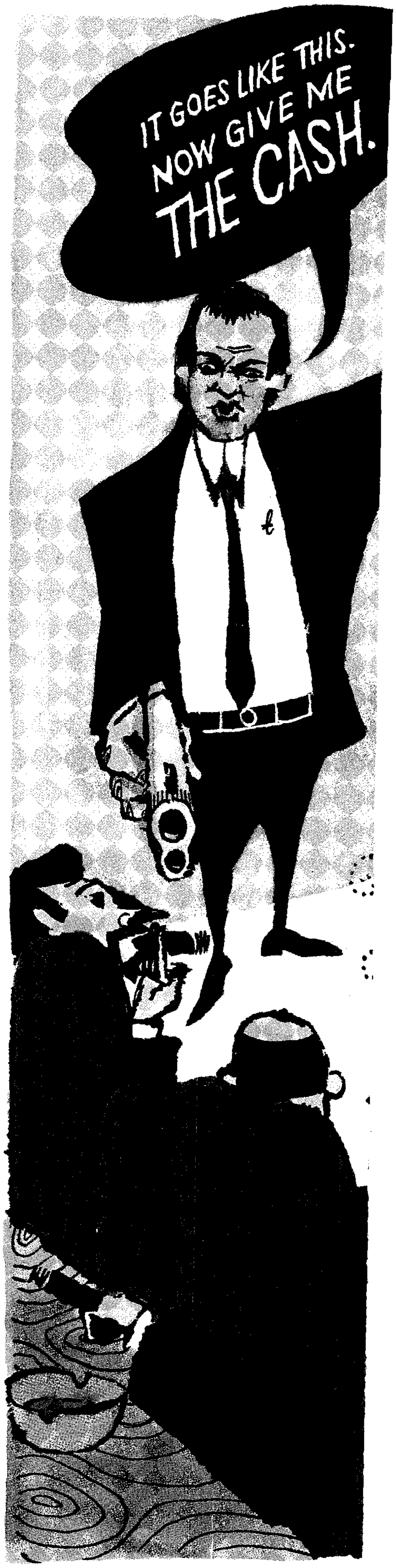
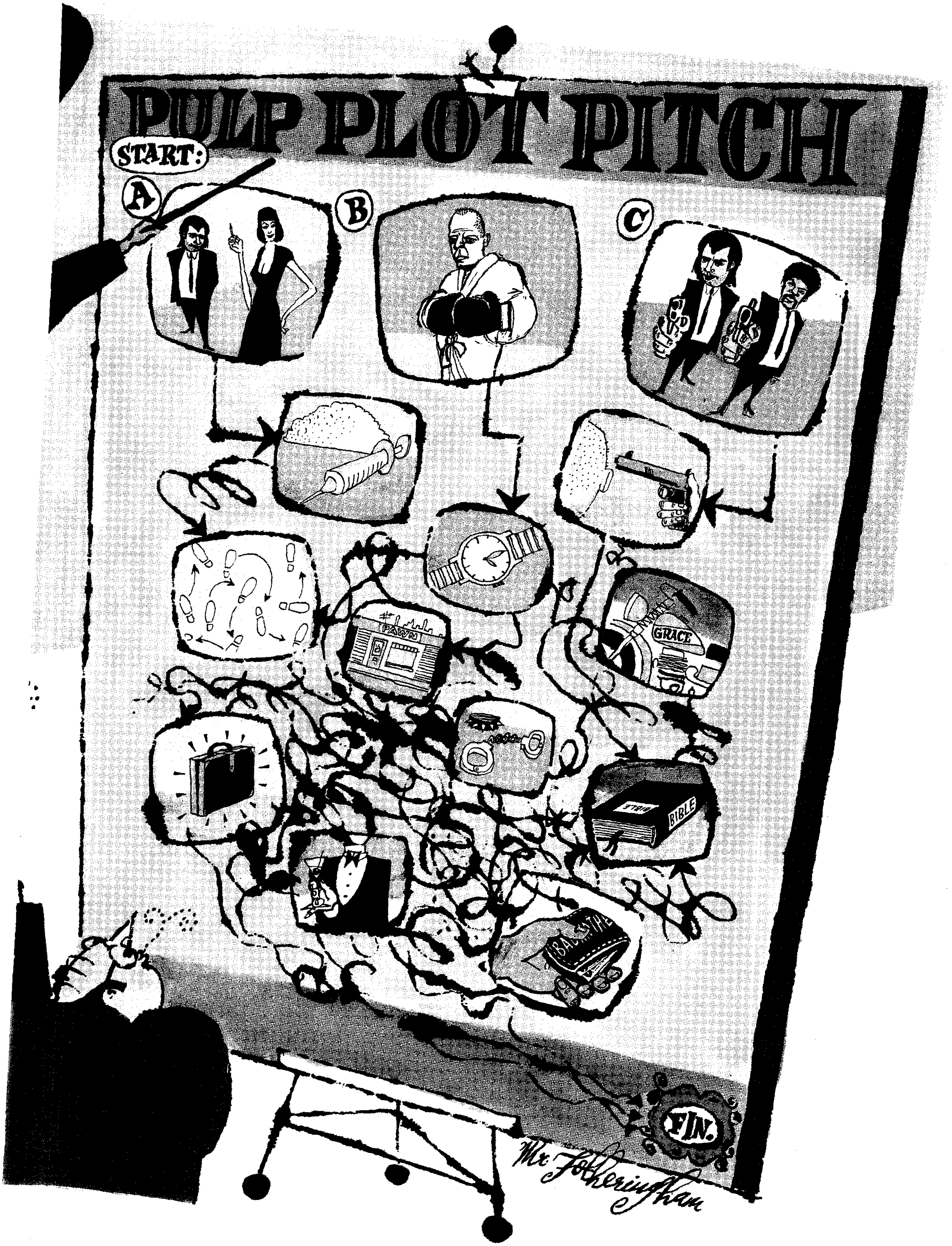
PULPING FICTION

MOVIEGOERS have had their hands full lately trying to unravel the threads of "Pulp Fiction," Quentin Tarantino's groovy movie about two hit men, which continues to give grief to the Hollywood executives who passed up the modestly budgeted project early on. The director, meanwhile, has been doing acting stints and smoothing out the warp of his biography. But for all the straight talk about his cinematic roots, Tarantino isn't above tossing out a literary clue or two about what inspired his movie's complex narrative. The real spark for the zigzagging plot, he said recently, was the stories of J. D. Salinger. "Killing Zooey," anyone?


IT GOES LIKE THIS. NOW GIVE ME THE CASH.


PULP PLOT PITCH
START:
A
B
C
PAWN
GRACE
BIBLE
FIN.
Mr. Fotheringham

"We've decided to experiment. I'll stay home more, and Victor's going to look for a job."

had investigated some of the allegations, had sadly concluded that they were true, and, in May of this year, confronted Durgananda and another swami, demanding to know why the truth had been kept from them for so many years. The confrontation occurred away from the ashram, and this time, according to the therapists, Durgananda did not say that the allegations were false. Durgananda told the therapists that she knew a number of the women quite well and was convinced that whatever had happened had been beneficial to them, but that the swamis had never talked about it, because they thought it would be more appropriate to be "discreet." The therapists have now left SYDA. When I phoned Durgananda and told her what they had said to me, she said, "My memory is that I did deny it to them," and she added that, whether the allegations were "true or not, it doesn't really change our understanding of Baba."

As disturbing as the sexual allegations were, Michael Dinga, the former SYDA Foundation trustee, and other ex-devotees gave Rodarmor equally disturbing descriptions of strong-arm tactics used to hush up ex-devotees or punish them for disloyalty. Over the years, the ex-devotees said, various "enforcers" confronted and threatened those not in SYDA's favor. Dinga and his wife, Chandra, told Rodarmor that they were subjected to months of harassment. Through a message left on another ex-devotee's answering machine, Rodarmor wrote, the Dingas were warned that if they didn't keep quiet "acid would be thrown in Chandra's face and Michael would be castrated." In the early eighties, ex-devotees were especially fearful of David Lynn, a Vietnam veteran. (Joe Don Looney, a famously colorful N.F.L. running back known in the sixties for his eagerness to infuriate coaches, became briefly involved in these activities as well.) Rodarmor also reported that Muktananda phoned Michael Dinga while he was still living at the ashram to complain about the swami Stan Trout; he told Dinga that "Trout's ego is getting too big," explaining that he was sending Lynn to set him straight, and that Dinga was not to interfere. (This incident preceded and was unrelated to Trout's open letter.) Dinga told Rodarmor that Lynn went to South Fallsburg, got into a fight with Trout, and punched him. (Lynn confirms that he punched him, but says that he went on his own initiative.) According to Rodarmor, Lynn and Looney visited another ex-devotee and told her that Muktananda had said that Chandra Dinga had only two months to live. The harassment, Rodarmor wrote, stopped only after the Dingas hired a lawyer and the local police paid a visit to the Oakland ashram.

It is this element in Rodarmor's account—the intimidation of those who leave SYDA and who appear to threaten it—that has carried over to Gurumayi's SYDA and has continued to shadow the organization, especially in connection with allegations about the treatment of Gurumayi's brother and co-successor, Nityananda.

LONG before Gurumayi and Nityananda were born, their father, a Bombay restaurateur named Sheena Shetty, was an admirer of Muktananda's. They first met in 1944, and for a while Shetty, a deeply religious man, provided Muktananda with living space above his restaurant. Eventually, Shetty and his wife, Devaki, sent two of their four children to live and study with Muktananda. Malti—the future Gurumayi—arrived in 1973, when she was eighteen; Subhash, the third child and Malti's junior by seven years, followed in 1978.

Subhash Shetty, who was known as a sweet-natured, somewhat shy boy, received the name Swami Nityananda Saraswati when he took vows of monkhood in October, 1980. The name was a significant honor, since Muktananda's own guru had also been called Nityananda. At the end of a huge public program in South Fallsburg on July 17, 1981, Muktananda, then seventy-three and in failing health, announced that Nityananda, who was eighteen, would be his successor. Nearly everyone was surprised by the news—including, it is said, Nityananda himself. While many welcomed the announcement, others worried that he was far too callow to take the guru's place. One person who seemed to be unprepared for the news was Malti, whom some people considered a far better candidate, because of her greater maturity, discipline, and experience.

Then, sometime the following winter, Muktananda began referring to his successors—plural—without clearly explaining himself. Finally, on February 25, 1982, several swamis interviewed him for *Siddha Path*, and he said that, since there were two sexes in the world, it seemed right to make a man and a woman his successors. On April 26th, in Ganeshpuri, Malti was renamed Chidvilasananda, was shorn of her radiant black hair, and took vows of monkhood. (Gurumayi, or "One who is absorbed in the guru," is an honorific.) Two weeks later, sister and brother, both of whom, ex-devotees say, had been in equal measure spoiled and kept on a tight leash by Muktananda, were installed as co-successors. In a video of the ceremony, both of them look awed and vulnerable. Gurumayi was then a couple of months shy of twenty-seven, Nityananda just nineteen.

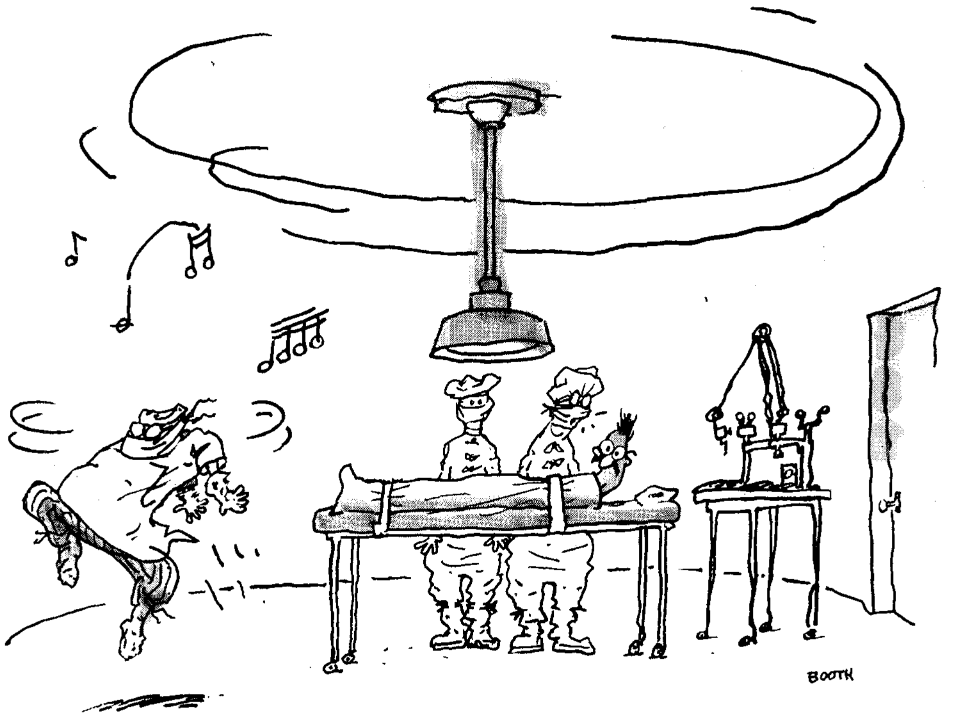
From the start, their styles differed. By most accounts, Nityananda was informal, accessible, chummy with the devotees, somewhat self-mocking, and preferred chanting, meditating, and drumming to giving talks, while Gurumayi enjoyed ceremony and took the task of guarding SYDA's public image—and her own—more seriously. Usually, when there were two darshan lines, hers was longer. Nityananda, for his part, seemed content to let his sister play a more dominant role in the running of the ashram.

Muktananda's death, five months after he installed the two as co-successors, deprived SYDA of its principal drawing card. It also left something of an organizational vacuum. In naming his successors, Muktananda apparently never said that either was "enlightened" or gave them specific instructions about running the organization. To make things worse, in the years that followed, many of the senior swamis, and about half the swamis altogether, left, because without him they felt less of a tie to the organization, or because of what they felt to be an increasingly authoritarian atmosphere.

Some devotees who in later years became disaffected left SYDA to follow another well-known female Indian spiritual leader, Mata Amritanandamayi, and a number of those who visited her while they were still part of the SYDA world were shocked to discover that their names were being written down as they arrived at her programs. SYDA denies that it has ever assigned the task of writing down the names of known followers or ex-devotees who attend programs of other spiritual leaders, but an ex-swami I talked to told me with considerable embarrassment that she herself had participated in one such sortie. Over the years, a large number of people have been told that they are no longer welcome at the ashram because they disagree with its policies. Although I spoke to at least a dozen such people, SYDA says that the only people not permitted to visit the ashram are those who have "a history of disruption of the peace and quiet of the ashram."

The task of attracting new devotees, clearly, was taking on a greater urgency. Though there had been tutoring of public speakers and a certain amount of institutional streamlining under Muktananda, he had allowed his swamis a fair amount of freedom. After his death, though, managers gradually took over many more of the swamis' functions, and almost every facet of the presentation of the ashram's religious and outreach programs fell under the control of the Programming Department, which came to rely on rehearsed talks, and even rehearsed audience responses, to smooth out SYDA's public programs. In time, swamis were occasionally even asked to wear little earphones when they gave talks, so that Gurumayi or George Afif, a Lebanese-born devotee and close aide, could make suggestions to them as they spoke.

Even true believers were sorely tested by a series of bizarre events that took place in Ganeshpuri at the end of 1985, when it was suddenly announced that Muktananda had named Nityananda as co-guru for only a three-year period, that the time was up, and that Nityananda was therefore stepping down both as co-successor and as a swami. To many in SYDA's ashrams back in the United States—especially those who had had powerful spiritual experiences through him—the announcement was baffling. Devotees were told to turn in photographs and videos that included Nityananda and to excise all pictures of him and information about him from their books; one former center leader remembers being given notice that pictures of Nityananda should be burned, because they would bring bad luck. Then, five months later, SYDA modified its previous announcement: now the reason Nityananda had left was that he had



"Dr. Rheinschreiber never does an appendectomy without music and dancing."

broken his vow of celibacy. Nityananda, once Muktananda's honored successor, had become not just a non-guru but a non-person.

Some people say that the seeds of conflict had been there from the beginning. Shortly after Muktananda's funeral, Gurumayi and Nityananda gave speeches about their new roles. In a video of the event that I watched recently (it had been saved by a resistant devotee during the great purge), Nityananda, his eyes filling with tears and his voice choking with emotion, clasped his sister's hand, held it up in the air, and said, "People have already started creating a split between us: she is better and he is bad; he is better and she is bad. I want you to know one thing. Many of you all know that we were both born to the same family, and we have been united since childhood. No matter what you may do, no matter what you may think of us, we won't split."

But three years later, in the fall of 1985, after the two gurus arrived, separately, in Ganeshpuri for ceremonies commemorating the third anniversary of Muktananda's death, this unity was already severely strained. Given the tensions, in fact, Nityananda told friends that he thought it might be a good idea for him to take time out and embark on a tour of the holy sites of India. That trip never took place. Instead, Nityananda ended up embarking on an odyssey that would ultimately take him to exile at his own small ashram, a place called Shanti Mandir (Temple of Peace), situated in the Catskills not far from the SYDA complex. Nityananda was initially reluctant to talk to me, but eventually he agreed to meet me at Shanti Mandir on a snowy day last winter. His ashram turned out to be a modest brick-and-wood house on a back road. Nityananda had a large round face, a dark beard, and a gentle, unassuming manner and was wearing the orange robes of a swami.

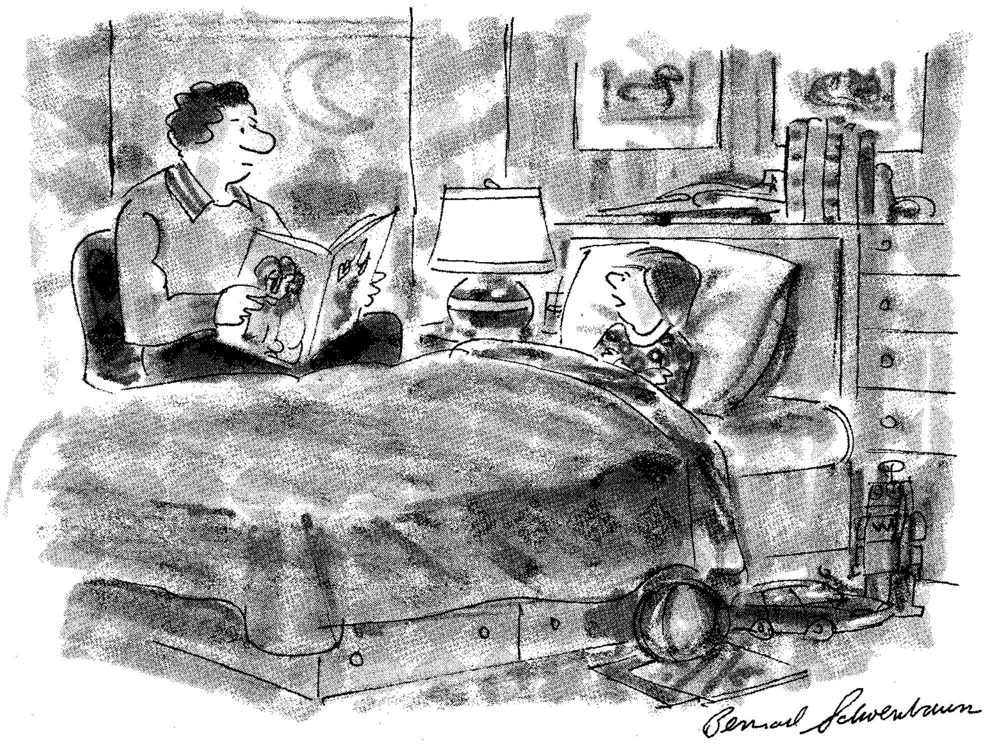
He readily admitted to me that, as SYDA charged, he had broken his vows, and that between the ages of nineteen and twenty-three, before his departure from SYDA, he had had sexual encounters with six women; he said he has admitted this to anyone who has asked him about it. He added that one of his lovers had been Devayani (now his principal aide). He said that he regretted his past lapses, but that he believes the essential gift he was given by Muktananda is eternal and that he is and will always be a successor. Nine years ago, however, Gurumayi made her disagreement on this score abundantly clear.

HERE is Nityananda's version of his downfall:

At about 10:30 P.M. on October 23, 1985, while thousands of people were chanting elsewhere in the Ganeshpuri ashram as part of the commemorative ceremonies, there was a knock at the door of Nityananda's apartment. When his attendant opened the door, seven or eight people pushed their way in and began shouting at Nityananda, "You've lost all your power! You're no longer a guru!" When he protested, his visitors told him that they were speaking on behalf of Gurumayi, and continued berating him. Nityananda says he tried to speak to his sister—he called her over the ashram's intercom—but she was unresponsive, saying only that they would talk in the morning. If that's how things were, he told her, he'd have to leave. About an hour later, however, he was told by his driver that three men on his sister's staff had slashed the tires of all the ashram cars.

The next morning, he met his sister in the vestibule of Muktananda's apartment, where she had been joined by George Afif. His sister asked him, "Well, what do you want to do?" And he replied, "Well, you don't want me here. I'd better leave, but since all the people have come for this ceremony I should probably stay until the end of it." When Gurumayi asked her brother to come to her room "to talk further," he found himself surrounded by the same group that had come to his room the night before. "These people are here to help you get out from within you what it is you want to say," his sister told him.

Afterward, he was led to Muktananda's study, where for the next eighteen days his only visitors were those Gurumayi permitted him to see—mainly, the same people who had come to his room and who now each day subjected him to lengthy harangues. He was taken out for two visits to the cafeteria and two public announcements, both of which he says he was forced to make: first, that he was taking a vow of silence, and then, five days later, that he was no longer a guru. The Mahamandaleshwar, the same ecclesiastical official who had overseen Nityananda's taking of monastic vows as well as many of SYDA's sacred ceremonies, was persuaded to give his blessing to ceremonies that stripped Nityananda of his monkhood, his spiritual name (he was officially renamed Ven-



"Say, Dad, think you could wrap it up? I have a long day tomorrow."

kateshwar Rao), and his guru status. On November 10th, Gurumayi was installed as sole successor.

Nityananda was then allowed to return to his rooms, and over the next week, he says, he signed papers relinquishing his power as co-ecclesiastical head of the SYDA Foundation, several blank sheets, and a document ceding access to a bank account. "Baba had put a million dollars for Gurumayi and myself in an account in Switzerland," Nityananda told me. "The ashram had its own accounts, and then there was a private account that Baba had his name on and that he transferred to us. He'd told me that if ever anything was to happen to the ashram—if people decided not to come, or any other misfortune happened—he had left enough for the two of us to live comfortably in the ashram."

On November 24th, a few days after Nityananda signed the papers, Gurumayi and Afif arrived in his room and summoned Devayani (the person in the ashram he was closest to) and eleven others, including six additional women Gurumayi accused him of having "abused." (Nityananda says he had had consensual sexual contact with four of the six, and none with the two others.) When they were all assembled, Gurumayi struck him and Devayani with a bamboo cane and then gave the cane to the six women and urged each in turn to continue striking him. The caning went on for three hours, Nityananda says, and throughout, he claims, Gurumayi kept urging his assailants to hit him more vigorously. Nityananda says, "At one point she said, 'Maybe I should beat him on his penis. That's the cause of all this.' " He also claims that after the attack had gone on for quite a long time, Gurumayi turned to an aide and said, "He's not going to break down, is he?" Then she turned toward the devotee Ganesh Irelan—who had once been a close associate of Nityananda and, a decade later, would turn up at the Lufthansa terminal at J.F.K.—and asked him if he wanted to do or say anything. Ganesh responded by punching Nityananda in the face. Before Gurumayi left, Nityananda says, she asked him, "You're not going to report this to the police, are you?"

THIRST

Here was my relation with the woman who lived all last autumn and winter day and night
on a bench in the 103rd Street subway station until finally one day she vanished:

we regarded each other, scrutinized one another: me shyly, obliquely, trying not to be furtive;
she boldly, unblinkingly, even pugnaciously; wrathfully even, when her bottle was empty.

I was frightened of her, I felt like a child, I was afraid some repressed part of myself
would go out of control and I'd be forever entrapped in the shocking seethe of her stench.

Not excrement, merely, not merely surface and orifice going unwashed, rediffusion of rum:
there was will in it, and intention, power and purpose; a social, ethical rage and rebellion.

. . . Despair, too, though, grief, loss: sometimes I'd think I should take her home with me,
bathe her, comfort her, dress her: she wouldn't have wanted me to, I would think.

Instead I'd step into my train: how rich, I would think, is the lexicon of our self-absolving;
how insane our bland, fatal assurance that reflection is righteousness being accomplished.

The dance of our glances, the clash: pulling each other through our perceptual punctures;
then holocaust, holocaust: host on host of ill, injured presences squandered, consumed.

Her vigil, somewhere, I know, continues: her occupancy, her absolute, faithful attendance;
the dance of our glances: challenge, abdication, effacement; the perfume of our consternation.

—C. K. WILLIAMS

WHEN abbreviated accounts of these events appeared in January and March of 1986 as cover stories in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, a large-circulation news magazine, SYDA responded with a packet of statements from SYDA's trustees, from a group of unnamed swamis, and from Gurumayi herself. These statements, coupled with SYDA's written answers to queries I have posed in recent months, produce a different version of the Ganeshpuri events, which confirms a number of Nityananda's contentions and disputes others. SYDA has been at pains throughout to prove that Nityananda is an inveterate liar; at one point they even showed me a videotape in which he talks about learning to lie as a schoolboy.

Gurumayi stated that, because she was concerned that if Nityananda left the ashram "harm would befall him and others," she ordered the ashram gates locked. When she was told that he had keys to all the gates, she decided that "we'll have to do something more drastic; we'll have to slash the tires." She acknowledged his relative isolation in Muktananda's study but insisted that he was there of his own volition—"to contemplate what he lacked and why he had lost what he thought he had had"—and that he could come and go as he pleased.

Gurumayi also confirmed the caning,

"With this film, I finally enter the front ranks of American moviegoers."

though she described the cane as "a small walking stick," adding that "in my presence, he received a few slaps with it from the women he had abused," in addition to "a few slaps from me." And while SYDA insists that Gurumayi never said anything like "He's not going to break down, is he?," Ganesh Irelan has confirmed to me that his frustration built to a point where he punched Nityananda; Gurumayi also noted that another man, a swami, was so frustrated he had to be restrained.

The main point of contention is whether Nityananda submitted to all this of his own free will or was subdued and coerced, and if so, to what degree. SYDA maintains that he could freely come and go from Muktananda's quarters (if not from the ashram itself). Several ex-devotees recently told me, however, that they saw Nityananda escorted by an armed guard. In addition, the mother of Gurumayi and Nityananda, Devaki Shetty, who was in Ganeshpuri at the time and was allowed to prepare Nityananda's lunches, repeatedly approached Gurumayi to express her concern over Nityananda's treatment; Gurumayi, Mrs. Shetty says, eventually told her to "go jump in the river." She was so upset that she left the ashram, and for nearly a decade neither she nor her husband has been permitted to return there or to communicate in any way with their daughter.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Nityananda himself was an active participant in the very ceremonies that defrocked him. His public announcements in 1985 seemed plainly to express a desire to step down. And he later wrote out a note in which he thanked Gurumayi for a "most amazing and revealing eighteen days"—those he spent isolated in Muktananda's study.

Nityananda now says that he felt that he had lost his power to resist. His second-oldest sister, Rani, whom I spoke with recently by phone, told me that when she and her husband were allowed to see him, on October 30th, he seemed unable to respond to them. "He wasn't acting like a fully conscious person." Even the Mahamandaleshwar, the cleric who gave his approval to Nityananda's ceremonial expulsion, is now of the opinion that Nityananda was forced to participate against his will. And although SYDA plays down the intensity of the caning, two people who caught a glimpse of Nityananda over the next two days recall that he had bruises on his arms. Several weeks later, when he spent time with leaders of a SYDA center in Germany, they saw scars on his arms, chest, and back.

Still, in an interview Nityananda gave several weeks after the event, he denied that he had been mistreated. Shortly after the interview, Nityananda says, he slipped away from Gurumayi's entourage in Hawaii and got on a plane to California. As he was leaving, he wrote Gurumayi another note, in which he thanked her for her "patience and compassion" and for taking "great care" of him, and asked for her blessing. Nityananda now says that he *was* grateful that Gurumayi and her followers no longer seemed interested in berating or abusing him; moreover, he says, he hoped that the note would keep them from pursuing him any further.

I have seen similar notes from other people who left SYDA in states of considerable distress. The overriding wish of the authors was to acknowledge gratitude for what they'd found in Siddha Yoga but also to stave off further trouble. An ex-swami named Paul Constantino, whom SYDA assigned to participate in a series of panels denigrating Nityananda, and who is now a teacher in Nityananda's programs and serves as an officer of the Shanti Mandir Corporation, told me recently that he, too, had written an appeasing note when he left. "I left because of the growing stultifying atmosphere of fear, of informers, of public confessions and Big Brotherness," he said. "But when I left, in 1987, I wrote Gurumayi a letter in which I asked for her blessing. I did it to keep her and George Afif off my back—absolutely."

AFIF seemed to play a central role in the SYDA experience of many of the ex-devotees I spoke with. A thin, wiry man with an Omar Sharif mustache, he became a devotee of Muktananda in 1974, and was a regular at SYDA's ashram in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "He was a charming man in many ways, with a strong devotional bent, and he had some talent as an artist," one of the people who knew him in his Ann Arbor days said. "He did a nice sketch of Baba, and went on to do quite a bit of decorating for SYDA later on. But there was always a mysterious quality about him, a sense of something dangerous, even duplicitous. He was always talking about loyalty; it was a sacred word to him." Afif hung out with University of Michigan students, although the school's records do not show that he was ever registered there.

Almost all the ex-devotees I spoke with consider Afif a man to be feared, and the most powerful person at the ashram after

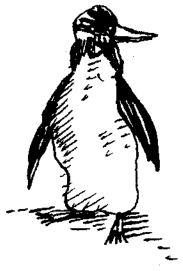
Gurumayi. Last winter, I attended an "exit counselling" session of an ex-SYDA devotee in which Afif's name came up repeatedly in a context of intimidation and sexual coercion. When the counsellor, Steve Hassan, asked the young woman if Afif had been considered a kind of No. 2 in the organization, she responded, "It's more like a point five." When I asked Kathy Nash, the SYDA spokesperson, about Afif, she told me that for several years he had the "highly visible" job of helping people during darshan with Gurumayi, but that his only official role in the organization had been supervising some construction projects. She added, "Mr. Afif's perceived position was more the result of his personal charisma and high visibility than of actual authority invested in him."

In 1983, Afif, who was married to a woman who also lived at the ashram, was charged with statutory rape and burglary in Santa Clara County, California. He pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of statutory rape, and was sentenced to a suspended six-month jail term and three years' probation. Under California law, the conviction was expunged after he served his probation satisfactorily. The teen-age girl involved was the daughter of prominent SYDA followers, who afterward left the organization in disgust. A friend of the girl's family, William Carter, a well-known photojournalist and fine-arts photographer, also left, telling Gurumayi in a letter that he had been appalled by the organization's treatment of the family and its tendency to resort to "dis-information" in times of crisis, and that he was cutting SYDA out of his will.

Over the years, others have raised questions about Afif's sexual behavior. A couple who in 1982 closed the SYDA center they were running later discovered that Afif had been having a sexual relationship with their teen-age daughter. An Australian ex-devotee I talked with alleges that Afif had sex with her in Ganeshpuri, in the spring of 1982, when she was thirteen years old and theoretically under the supervision of an ashram guardian. Her experience had been similar to that of the woman whose exit counselling I witnessed: Afif, the Australian woman said, had got her alone under false pretenses and intimidated her into silence.

SYDA says, regarding the California case, that it did not "condone Afif's behavior" and notes that he moved out of the ashram during the court proceedings. Others recall that during the months prior to his court appearances he was kept out of sight at the homes of various SYDA devotees. Nityananda says that he argued with his sister at the time that SYDA should dissociate itself from Afif; he believes that Afif has been his enemy ever since. Certainly Afif played a prominent role in the events surrounding Nityananda's removal as co-guru. He was present during the caning and, Nityananda says, warned him afterward that if anyone interfered with what was happening there would be dire consequences. During this period, various witnesses saw Afif carrying a gun.

In light of the drastic reaction to Nityananda's broken vows of celibacy, Gurumayi's relationship with Afif invites scrutiny. Not long ago, I located an ex-devotee named Andrea Skeen, a psychiatric nurse, who in 1981 and 1982 served as Gurumayi's personal secretary and confidante. Skeen alleges that Gurumayi and Afif spent a night together just before Gurumayi took her vows and again after she had taken them. On the first occasion, in Ganeshpuri, Skeen says, she was asked to wait all night outside a one-room bungalow in which the two were staying. On the second occasion, according to Skeen, she and Gurumayi were sharing a room during an intensive at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay. Gurumayi, she says, left after Skeen fell asleep, went to Afif's room, and didn't return until the next morning, when she confided to Skeen where she had been. Skeen, who had previously had several conversations with Gurumayi about her relationship with Afif, was aware of private letters that Afif and Gurumayi had sent to each other, and says she was eventually asked to collect all of Gurumayi's letters to Afif and destroy them.



Whether the relationship was sexual or not only they can say, but it was close enough so that during late 1982 and early 1983 SYDA devotees began talking about it. Patti Kuboske, a family therapist who was a SYDA devotee for eighteen years and a swami for eight, and worked closely with Gurumayi and was deeply devoted to her, told me that she decided to inform Gurumayi about what was being said. Kuboske recalls that when she did bring the matter up Gurumayi stared at her in silence for a moment and then said, "You should know that nothing I could do would affect what I've been given." When I asked Kathy Nash if the relationship between Gurumayi and Afif was personal, she replied, "If by 'personal' you mean 'romantic' or 'sexual' . . . the allegation is wholly false; it does not contain even a grain of truth."

Last spring, Kathy Nash told me that Afif was working on an ashram construction project. Several months ago, however, when I expressed interest in interviewing him, I was informed through a SYDA lawyer that he had "no present relationship at all with the foundation"; when I asked for his telephone number, I was told that "when we last heard from George Afif he advised us he was going to be travelling in the Far East, and we have no other information." Efforts to locate Afif independently have proved unavailing.

In late March of 1986, five months after the Ganeshpuri events, a series of Nityananda-bashing panel presentations, presided over by swamis and inner-circle devotees, took place at a number of ashrams, including South Fallsburg. One former longtime devotee dates his decision to leave SYDA from the day he and his wife attended the first of the South Fallsburg panels. After each panel, devotees went back to their rooms to discuss what they had heard, and when he expressed doubt about what had happened—he had been especially dismayed by a swami's lurid description of Nityananda's sex life and by a video in which self-deprecating or foolish remarks made by Nityananda were edited together to make him look bad—he found himself "turned in" for having "negative feelings." He says it was fairly routine for those who expressed uncertainty about the whole Nityananda affair to be told solicitously, "We hear you're having problems."

"It was always put in terms of *you* having the problem," this man said. " 'Wrong understanding' was the phrase they always used. There couldn't be anything wrong with what was happening. It was always, 'You have some sort of mental misfunction.' " Another ex-devotee, an artist who lives in Massachusetts, never returned to SYDA after attending a panel. When she got home, she wrote Gurumayi a letter objecting to what she had seen and heard. Gurumayi never answered her, but not long afterward the artist learned that George Afif was telling people that she was a cocaine dealer.

EVENTUALLY, Nityananda decided that it was his vocation to be a spiritual teacher after all. He began giving programs both in India and abroad, financing his travels and expenses through donations from a few well-to-do followers and through the fees that he charged for his programs. In 1989, he renewed his vows of swamihood under the supervision of the Mahamandaleshwar, who gave him his blessing to continue his work. He says he also resumed a life of celibacy.

In the spring of 1988, he moved to a small house in Livingston, New Jersey, which became his first residential center; two years later, he moved to the house in the Catskills. The house is rented to him for a dollar a year by one of his devotees. Its proximity to South Fallsburg may seem surprising, but after refusing the offer of the house for that reason for several years Nityananda became convinced that SYDA would be unlikely to bother him in its own back yard. (In fact, he has been bothered there only once: the day he gave his first program, about twenty picketers stood outside, carrying signs, taking photographs, and writing down the names of attendees.) Nowadays, Nityananda has a mailing list of two thousand friends and devotees, many of whom regularly take part in his programs. Those who attend the programs understand that to do so invites permanent banishment from SYDA. SYDA believes that Nityananda has never publicly accepted the consequences of his lapses from celibacy. Devotees who have continued to feel strong ties to both Gurumayi and Nityananda and have tried to visit them both have been ejected, often in a quite intimidating way, from SYDA's ashrams.

Ever since Nityananda resumed his teaching, he has faced well-organized, aggressive picketing—similar to what greeted him at J.F.K.—throughout the United States, in Europe, and in India. Local press accounts and police files registering complaints against overenthusiastic picketers mark the trail of his travels. I have talked to dozens of witnesses who have attested to the harassment; it has included disruptions of his meetings by groups of people shouting obscenities, a physical assault on one of his followers, stalking of his devotees, reports of his supposedly bad behav-

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HISTORY NOTE

REINVENTING LINCOLN

AT Gettysburg, a hundred and thirty-one years ago, Abraham Lincoln distilled the meaning of the Civil War into two hundred and seventy-two words. His famous speech is chiselled in limestone on the south wall of a shrine on the Potomac devoted to his worship. But the Gettysburg Address is not our Sermon on the Mount. From beginning to end, it is tragically paradoxical. It is a credo of filial piety, the act of reverence being the sacrifice of thousands of sons in the name of the fathers' unfulfilled ideals. The blood of the fallen and the holiness of the past are mixed to produce "a new birth of freedom."

It is altogether fitting that every age has its own vision of Lincoln. Just as there must be "a new nation," there must be a new Lincoln. But every age differs from every other, as the former University of Virginia historian Merrill D. Peterson observes in "Lincoln in American Memory." For the post-Civil War generation, Lincoln was Christ, dying for our sins. At the same time, he was the godhead of the Republican Party. During the "return to normalcy" in the twenties, the freethinking Lincoln, who never belonged to any church, was cast as a devout Christian. By the end of the thirties, the poet Carl Sandburg had created a multi-volume biography of the democratic idealist suitable for the New Deal. On the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, in which he cited the Great Emancipator. In the last several years, however, Lincoln has been accused by some black historians of being a white supremacist and by some psychobiographers of engaging in patricide: Slick Abe and Sick Abe. But the majestic Lincoln has endured, and is captured in this illustration of the berobed sixteenth President by Sam Fink, whose book "The Illustrated Gettysburg Address" will be published by Random House on the anniversary date—November 19th.

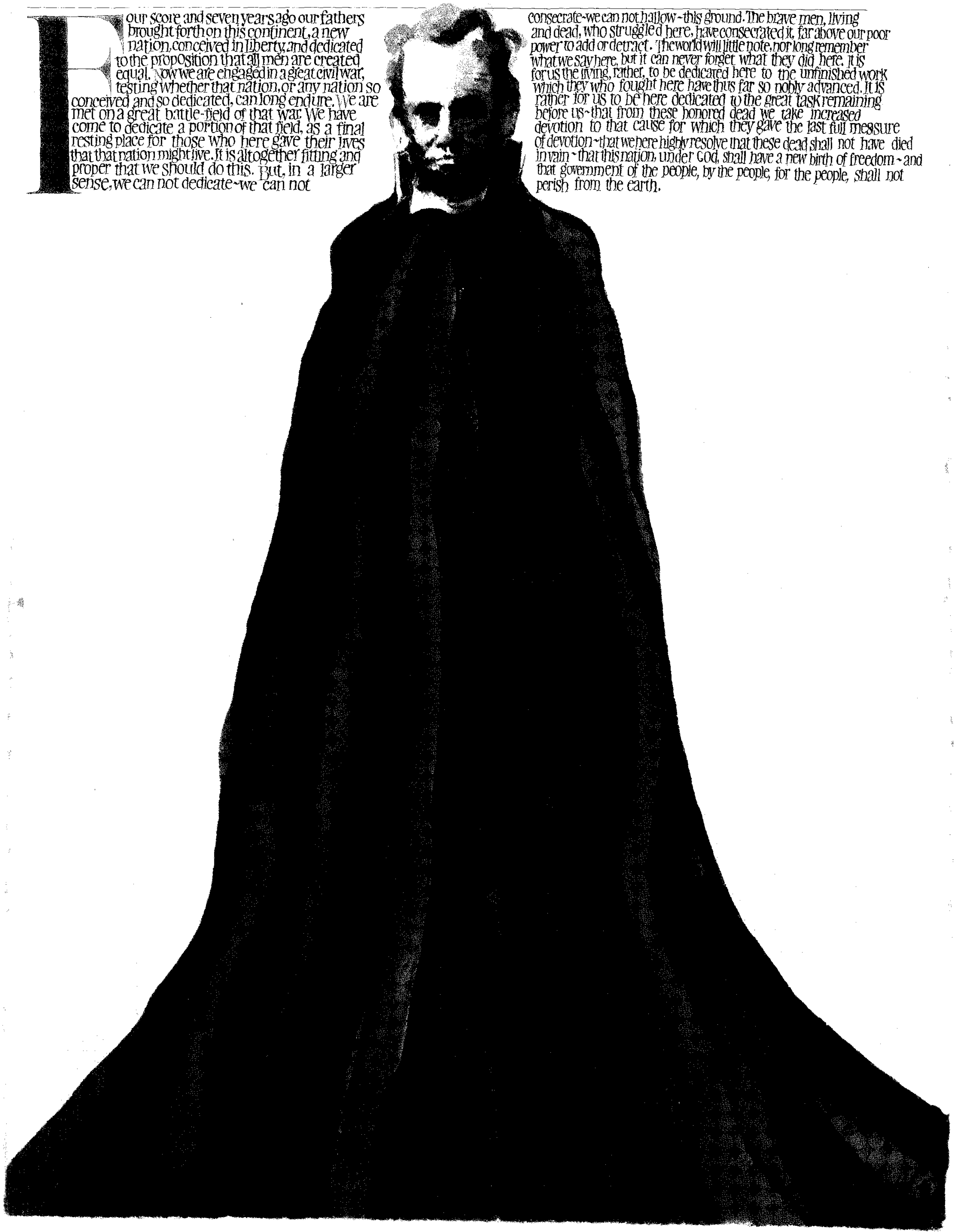
"What would Lincoln do?" was a favorite essay question for students of generations past. But in a campaign season whose chief element is the exploitation of anger there seems to be little room for even a grace note.

In the conservative book of the moment, "The Bell Curve," Charles Murray and the late Richard J. Herrnstein claim that blacks, on average, have lower intellectual capabilities, and that therefore government programs to ameliorate inequality will be fruitless. What would Lincoln do? In his debates with Stephen A. Douglas, when both men were running for the Senate in 1858, Lincoln implored the voters "to discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man—this race and that race and the other race as being inferior." This was an argument, Lincoln maintained, that was used only to prevent the promise of equal opportunity from being spread "to all people of all colors everywhere."

In California, Proposition 187 would deny basic health, welfare, and education services to illegal immigrants and their children—the latest manifestation of the nativism that in Lincoln's day was expressed in the Know-Nothing Party. "I am not a Know-Nothing," Lincoln wrote his friend Joshua Speed in 1855. "That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that '*all men are created equal.*' We now practically read it 'all men are created equal, *except negroes.*' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all men are created equal, except negroes, *and foreigners, and catholics.*' When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocracy." Read briskly, that passage might fit into a thirty-second spot.

Throughout the Civil War, Lincoln mobilized every national resource but hatred. Lincoln was not an otherworldly saint, too good for this earth. He was as ambitious a politician as has ever held the Presidency. Cheap anger, especially when dedicating a cemetery, would have been an easy currency. But his grasp of the conflict went far beyond hostility. His idea of the Union was transcendent.

—SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL



Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate - we can not consecrate - we can not hallow - this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln drawn by Sam Fink. Every age finds the man it needs in the sixteenth President.

ior to the immigration authorities of two countries and the police of a third, and, on one occasion outside Boston, a murder threat.

One of the nastier of these episodes took place in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on August 3 and 4, 1989. That Sunday's Ann Arbor *News* described it as "a protest against a religious leader that started Thursday night" and "erupted into violence Friday night." While Nityananda was teaching, the story went on to say, "one of his followers was pushed down and kicked outside the house by four demonstrators. The four of them then kicked in a door to enter the residence, assaulted the swami and another follower, and threw bottles of skunk scent against the walls." A day earlier, according to witnesses, about fifty picketers had demonstrated across the street from the house where the programs were being held. The picketers had brought along large signs: "WE LOVE ANN ARBOR, KEEP YOUR FILTH OUT OF HERE," "FROM MONK TO SKUNK," and "RAPE AND LYING IS YOUR GAME, NITYANANDA AIN'T YOUR NAME." That evening, three men interrupted a program and shouted, "Hey, fatso, hey, fake guru!" and "There's the son of a bitch!" and then left, pouring skunk oil over the heads of two people standing by the door. The next night, sentries were posted; even so, two of the men from the night before, one of them wearing a wig, broke down the door. They kicked Nityananda's driver in the chest as he tried to shield his boss; once inside, they threw skunk oil on the guru and several others, and knocked down a disabled man with a cane who was trying to stop them. Earlier, devotees from SYDA's Ann Arbor ashram distributed leaflets that read "Warning!!! The man you are about to see is a fraud. We know—he deceived us and ruined our lives."

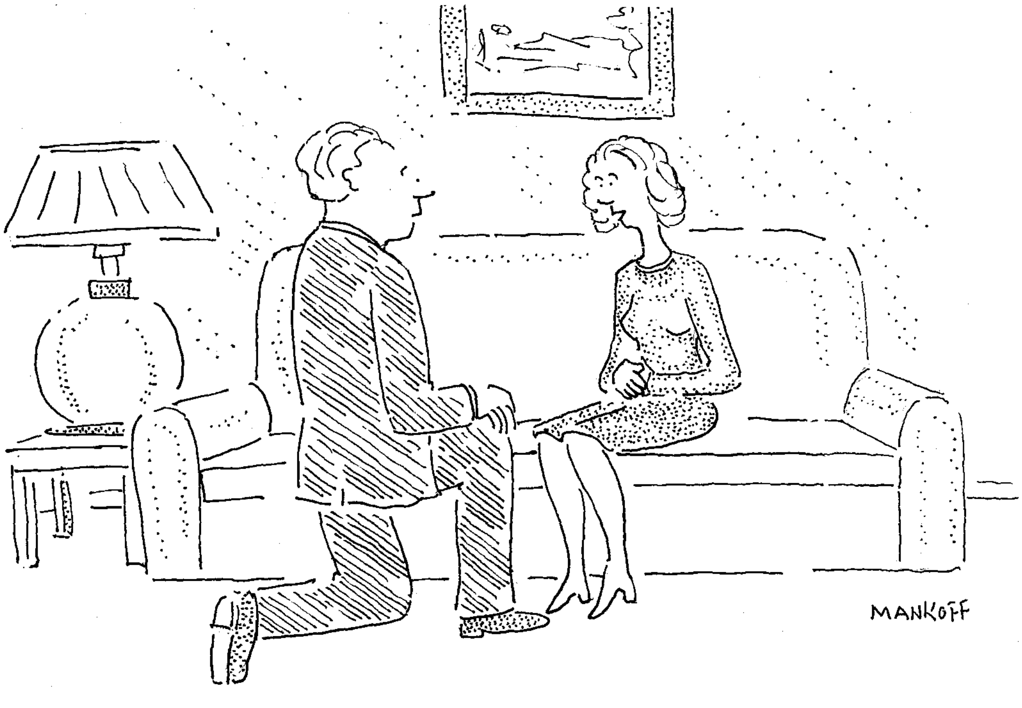
SYDA has steadfastly maintained that those who demonstrate against Nityananda do so on their own initiative—out of a sense of betrayal—and at their own expense. It is certainly true that many devotees felt and continue to feel betrayed by Nityananda. But a former devotee who participated in the Ann Arbor picketing told me that he did so at George Afif's request. He was told that he should use his own car and money, and assumed that he'd be paid back for some expenses, though he never was; he added that when he returned to South Fallsburg afterward, Gurumayi smiled at him and said, "Skunk oil, ah!" Another ex-devotee said that while she was at the South Fallsburg ashram she was summoned to a meeting with a swami, an ashram official, and some eleven other devotees, and was pressured to participate in the Ann Arbor event.

Since July of 1986, Gurumayi and Nityananda have neither seen nor spoken to one another. A few months ago, when I asked Nityananda why he thought his sister had turned against him, he took a while to answer. Finally, he said, "I just think she wanted the whole thing for herself, and she tried to come up with a way to do it—to have the whole organization, the devotees, the money, the power as a guru, solely, without having to share or have anything to do with me. If somehow we could have talked to each other, we could have worked it out—she could have had it. But I think that the fear that she had and still has—and so do her people—is that by Baba giving me the name he did, no matter what they say or do, somehow people will never forget me. And they haven't, because he gave me the name of his own guru."

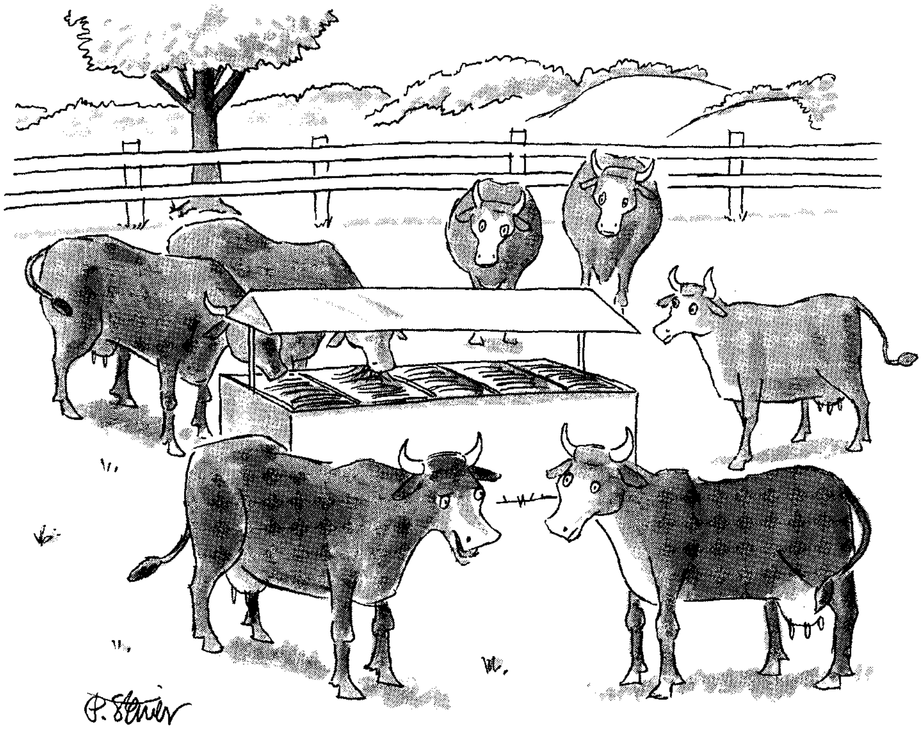
Nityananda claims to hope that some sort of familial reconciliation might still be possible. After the Ann Arbor encounter, he wrote his sister an impassioned letter, begging her to talk with him and help put an end to the violence. The letter said, in part, "Different disciples of the same Master have become Gurus [and have] remained friends and live in harmony. Why can't we do the same? . . . I hope that you will read this personally and acknowledge that you have indeed received it. I pray so we can communicate with each other soon." Nityananda signed his letter "With all my love."

Gurumayi didn't write back. Instead, Nityananda received a letter from SYDA's general counsel, Mark Cohen, a lawyer based in Austin, Texas, protesting Nityananda's "irresponsible and characteristically inappropriate" accounts of harassment by people associated with SYDA.

"AN Indian will listen to his guru, nod his head, and go home and, even if he's a deeply religious person, ignore fifty per cent of what the guru has told him, because his own sense of the world tells him to do that," an Indian man who is well versed in Yogic culture said to me recently. But Westerners who jump heart first into a cloistered Indian subculture do not always find it easy to distinguish what is spiritual from what is Indian—or merely the whim of the guru.



"I'm fond of you, Dave, I really am, but you're just not tough enough on crime."



"Yes, it's a salad bar, but it's still mainly hay."

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A couple of years ago, in an attempt to help SYDA run more efficiently and improve morale, an Australian devotee and organizational-development expert brought in one of several popular teamwork problem-solving tools used by big corporations in the last decade. His was named Working Together, but is mostly remembered for the part of the program called Team Data Handling. According to several people who were around then, the program succeeded in giving staff members more input into the day-to-day decision-making process but did not address SYDA's more deep-seated problems, largely because, as one ex-devotee said, about the organization in general, "so many people are afraid of offending the guru and being dispossessed of their Shakti."

It is obvious to anyone who spends much time around SYDA's devotees that the vast majority of them are far removed from the more hidden and controversial aspects of the organization's history. They chant, they meditate, they attend programs, they volunteer their time at the ashrams, and they work hard, in accordance with Siddha Yoga teachings, to push beyond their own particular limitations toward some experience of transcendence. The film director André Gregory told me that he is deeply grateful to Gurumayi and her swamis for showing him "a technique of prayer that is in the body . . . a physical way of experiencing God." Michael Karlin, a SYDA trustee who is a senior partner in a large, successful accounting firm in Los Angeles and recently flew to New York to express the foundation's concerns about this article before it went to press, was undoubtedly speaking for thousands of his fellow-devotees when he said that "the greatest personal experiences in my life I've had through Siddha Yoga." Karlin, an attractive, soft-voiced man of forty, spoke with pride of the quality and integrity of his fellow-devotees and the integrity of the organization he has been connected with for twelve years. However, when the conversation turned to the subject of Nityananda (whom he has never met), his voice became charged with anger. Asked why, nearly a decade after the break, SYDA devotees still dog Nityananda's tracks, he said, "These people have been deeply, deeply hurt by his actions." But even if one accepts SYDA's own version of its history—as a tale of two perfect beings whose tradition has been sullied by an all-but-demonic transgressor—one has to wonder why so little effort appears to have been put into the task of overcoming the rage directed toward Nityananda and moving on. In other contexts, that is what SYDA teachers advise devotees to do all the time.

In fact, my own experience with SYDA has in a modest way confirmed some of the things ex-devotees complained about. I have been told repeatedly of the harm I would cause by writing negative things about a "pure path"; quiet efforts were made to discredit me with my editors; a barrage of accusatory letters arrived from a SYDA lawyer questioning, before he had even read the story, my integrity as a journalist and the motives of this magazine; and, this summer, the co-chairman and co-founder of a well-known Madison Avenue advertising agency visited the magazine's offices to express his displeasure and to warn that there were "many prominent, many powerful people who are going to be hurt by this piece."

The righteous rage of defenders of the faith is, of course, a familiar theme in the history of religion, as are the endless battles over questions of legitimacy when charismatic spiritual leaders die. If the traditions upon which SYDA draws are ancient, so too is the sort of animosity it has spawned. Several months ago, I asked SYDA in a letter how it was possible for so farseeing and enlightened a leader as Muktananda to have made such a bad mistake (from their point of view) in his choice of successor. The answer was "Would you consider asking a Catholic priest the question: 'If Jesus was who he said he was, how could he have picked Judas Iscariot as a disciple?' " SYDA insists that Gurumayi is the sole repository of Muktananda's wisdom and power. Nityananda, excommunicated from SYDA guruhood, nonetheless stakes his own, nonexclusive claim to successorship, and believes that, despite his youthful transgressions, what was given to him cannot be withdrawn or lost. Thus are schisms born.

But belief in a perfect master or an incontrovertible spiritual dogma is always fraught with danger. Michael Karlin's assertion at our meeting that "the Siddha Yoga teachings cannot be challenged: the truth is the truth" goes to the heart of religious belief itself. If, over the centuries, the longing for a world in which, as Blake put it, everything would be perceived as infinite once the doors of perception were cleansed has enlarged countless lives, it has frequently left behind as a casualty a prudent acknowledgment of ordinary human fallibility. ♦

THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS

PLAYING THE DIVA

What does it take to become Norma Desmond? On the eve of her Broadway opening, Glenn Close explains, in between costume changes and entrances.

BY STEPHEN SCHIFF

If you were in the audience on Halloween night for the final New York dress rehearsal of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical "Sunset Boulevard," and if you peered past the set's gilt and rococo and let your gaze glide along the huge central staircase to the curtains way up in the top right-hand corner—well, there's a squalid little room up there, just out of sight, with a couple of shelves and a mirror. And that's where I was when, toward the end of Act I, Glenn Close came clambering up in her underwear.

She had just finished singing one of her most taxing numbers down below. When it ended, she had swept gravely off the stage, had ripped away the enormous costume and the turban she was wearing, and had dropped them in a heap. Then she had crawled frantically up a rickety hidden stairway—using her hands to climb, the way a monkey does—arriving finally at the squalid little room in time for a twenty-second costume-and-wig change.

Close was a sight. Made up for the role of the faded silent-screen star Norma Desmond, her face was Kabuki-white, with raccoon eyes and black, pencil-thin brows drawn at least an inch above where eyebrows are normally supposed to grow. Her mouth was blood-red, and her hair was enshrouded in a tight beige skullcap, so that various wigs and turbans could be planted on her head. As three dressers grabbed her and began pulling garments over her head, she kept panting dramatically, expelling breath in little bursts. She said nothing to anyone, and no one said anything to her, and a moment later she was out of there, slowly descending that majestic staircase, making yet another grand entrance in a musical that is a compendium of grand entrances.

I had rendezvoused with her earlier in the evening, a half hour before showtime, in another squalid little room in the Minskoff Theatre, this one with an upright piano in it. Close had entered in full Kabuki-face, but she was also wearing a tatty white bathrobe, sheer black kneesocks, and rubber-soled orthopedic sandals. She looked like the dottiest grandma at the Home. Sitting in front of the piano was the show's conductor, Paul Bogaev, who is a robust man with a head of graying curls. When Close walked in, he said, "Give me some news."

"New new new new new," Close sang. And then, "Nah nah nah nah nah." Her voice is clear and pretty, and, though it thins in the upper register and hardens in the lower, she knows how to use its anomalies. "I think it works for Norma, actually, to have all those different sounds," she told me, "because she's sometimes fragile, she's sometimes ordering people around, and I think, actually, it's O.K." Close sang onstage in the 1980 musical "Barnum," and she has been known to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Mets games, but she has never considered herself a musical performer. "I took voice lessons for a long time when I was starting in New York," she said. "I mean, I have a voice and I can sing, but my throat would always tighten up, and I didn't know how, technically, to loosen it. And one of the most exciting things for me has been how far I've come since our first rehearsal. You have to learn to place your voice up in your mask"—she patted the area around her nose and cheekbones—"and get it off your vocal cords. In the beginning, I never knew if I could hit those high belting notes, and if I hit them I couldn't sustain them. It was frightening. Now I've at least come to the point where it's pretty consistent."

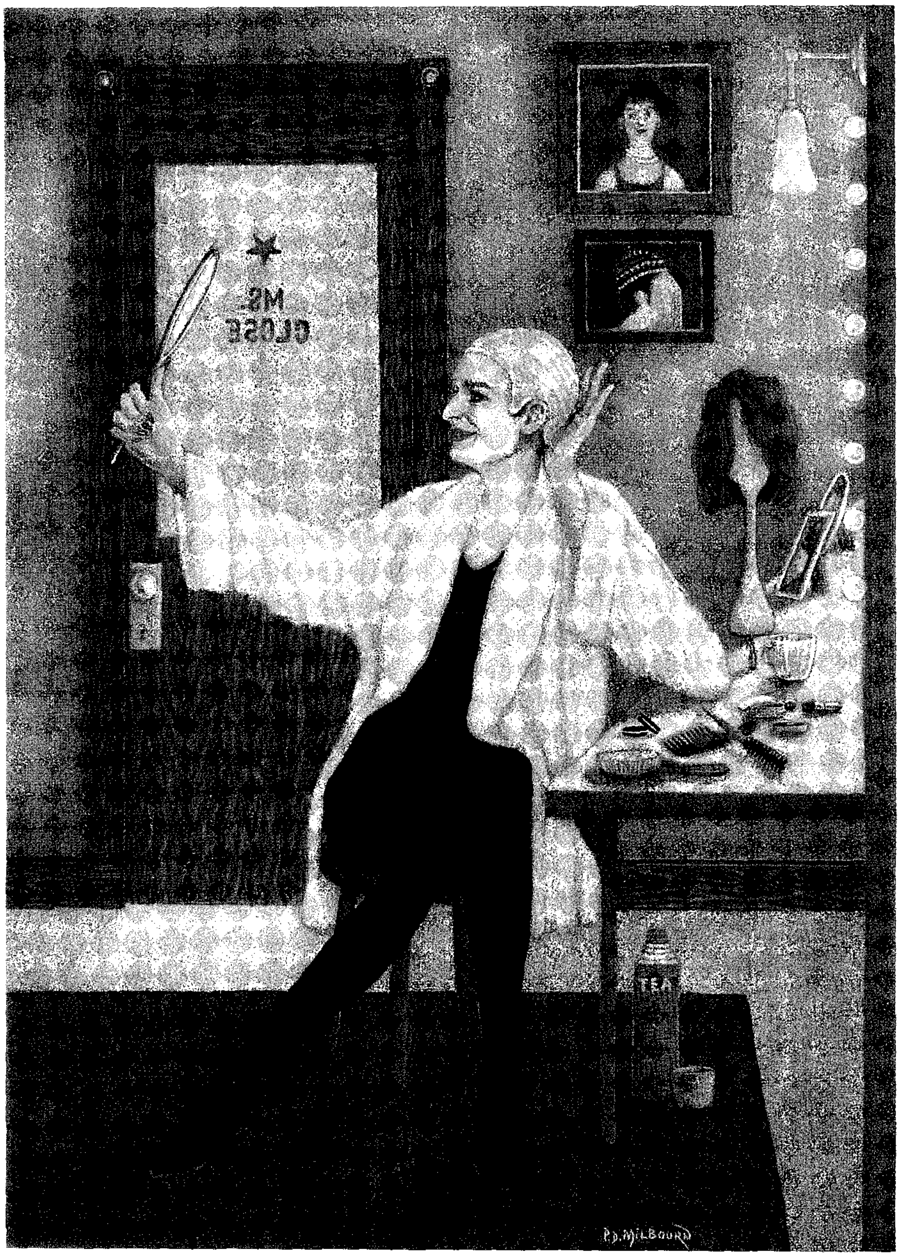
"Give me some knees," Bogaev said, and Close sang, "Knee knee knee knee knee." Then the two of them worked on songs from the show, with Close posing and gesturing, shutting her eyes and flinging herself into the role. Every now and then, Bogaev reached up and gave her clavicle a surprisingly rough shove, to make her throw her shoulders back and open up her chest. As a finale, Close crooned a melting rendition of "Hello, Young Lovers," from "The King and I," and then we strode out toward the stage.

It was five minutes till showtime, and you could hear the audience on the other side of the curtain, murmuring and coughing. Above our heads, a double for Alan Campbell, the show's male lead, was standing on a platform; a silver wire came out of his back. When the curtain rose, he would be suspended in midair above a scrim, to make you think he was a dead man floating face down in a swimming pool. All around the stage, chorus boys and girls were milling about in glistening costumes. Suddenly, at stage center, Close dropped to all fours and started doing stretches, still in her dotty-grandma outfit. No one spoke, but no one was silent, either. Everyone was doing vocal exercises, oohing and cooing. The place sounded like an attic full of pigeons. Now and then, one oohing player would pass another, stop oohing long enough to say, "Have a great show," and start oohing again.

Then Close scurried to her dressing room, to be molded into her first costume by her indefatigable personal dresser, Lynn Mann. There are twelve costume changes in this show; the quickest one comes in the second act, and it has to be completed in seventeen seconds. All the clothes are lavish and heavy, festooned with glass beads and gold thread and real feathers. The designer, Anthony Powell, has made them even more voluminous for the New York run than they were for last season's run in Los Angeles, and Close has been having trouble with them. "It takes me awhile," she said. "Like last night my whole performance was about costume changes, and I was actually quite separated from my performance. It was very much rehearsal for me." As the overture began—we could hear it through a tinny speaker in the dressing-room ceiling—Close was wearing a black push-up bra and a black girdle, and a man named David Brown (Close's "hair supervisor") was stuffing microphone transmitters the size of cigarette boxes, only slimmer, into pockets at her inner thigh and the small of her back. He looped wires up over her skullcap and affixed them to a pair of tiny flesh-colored microphones that would dip down over her forehead throughout the show. Great. Now she was the dotty grandma from outer space.

But when the gown went on, and then the black-and-gold Chinese robe on top of it, and then the golden turban, Close began turning into Norma. Her mouth tugged downward in a contemptuous moue; her blackened eyelids drooped haughtily. As she and I stood in the wings awaiting her entrance, she held her hands slightly curved in front of her, as though she were carrying a small loaf of bread, and her fingernails looked like red talons. She breathed loudly and rhythmically—a runner pacing herself. Then she gave me a signal, and we scampered up the rickety steps to the squalid little room—Close first, followed by Lynn Mann (holding the train of her robe), followed by me. A few moments later, the little room began to move.

It was too dark to see. Far down below, Alan Campbell was singing; lights and riggings were gliding by overhead; and then we could hear clapping. The eye-popping mansion set, on which we were secretly riding, had just floated into place, and the audience was applauding its statues and its furbelows and its grandly curving flight of stairs. Standing an inch in front of me, Close bellowed "You there! Why are you so late?" in a gigantic voice that seemed to be coming from above and behind us. It was her first line of the show. As the words echoed, she slipped through a curtain in front of me and began her descent of the long staircase into Act I.



Glenn Close gives a trancelike performance that can convince you that Norma Desmond is not just a batty old vamp but a tragic monarch, worthy of both pity and terror.

PATRICK MILBOURNE

"SUNSET BOULEVARD" is an adaptation of Billy Wilder's 1950 film about the final dementia of an aging silent-screen star. In the film, Gloria Swanson played Norma, and young William Holden played the writer who sells the last shreds of his integrity to become her kept man, pretending along with her that her big comeback is just around the corner. The movie was half Hollywood satire, half film noir, and there was more than a little camp in it as well: much of its pleasure came from its cackling refusal to take itself seriously, even when it was at its most baroque and gruesome. But Andrew Lloyd Webber's version heightens a story that needed no heightening; now it's a chilly, oddly distasteful opera, at once florid and banal, and when I first saw it, in London two years ago, the star of the show was plainly John Napier's grandiose sets. In front of them, Patti LuPone, as Norma Desmond, belted her heart out, but she could never compete with Napier's immense recreation of a Cecil B. De Mille back lot, his Paramount Pictures archway, and, especially, his rendition of Norma's mansion, with its spiralling columns, its gilded niches and pediments, its Empire sofas upholstered with gold thread.

On Broadway, the sets are even bigger, and the music is even more beset

with vaguely Arabian froufrou. But there is no doubt who the star is. As Norma Desmond, Glenn Close gives a performance of great size and equally great delicacy, a trancelike performance that can convince you that Norma is not just a batty old vamp but a tragic monarch, worthy of both pity and terror. Close gives Norma detail without sacrificing force: she gives her lordly disdain along with gleaming Gloria Vanderbilt smiles; she sweeps Norma from girlishness to Medean ferocity and never loses the shadings in between. Patti LuPone had been promised the role when the play came to Broadway, and she recently reached a settlement with Andrew Lloyd Webber and his producers for giving it to Close. Whatever the legal arguments were, her case has no merit onstage. After one of the dress rehearsals, the formidable Broadway actress Elaine Stritch came back to pay her respects to Close. "I don't know how to tell you what you are like up there," she said, and her failure to express it expressed it perfectly.

But wait. Can we really be talking about Glenn Close? *That* Glenn Close? Since her movie breakthrough twelve years ago, in "The World According to Garp," Close has worked as steadily as any actress in Hollywood, receiving five Academy Award nominations (for Best Supporting Actress in "Garp," "The Big Chill," and "The Natural," and for Best Actress in "Fatal Attraction" and "Dangerous Liaisons") along the way. She has an extensive history on the stage, too, in plays like "The Real Thing" and "Death and the Maiden" (both of which won her Tonys). Yet if Close has long been a star, she has never been a Star. On the screen, she has often seemed motherly, plain, even mannish. Her juiciest role, as the avenging Alex in "Fatal Attraction," was sexy, but in a scary, gorgonlike way: Close had tentacle hair and a fierce, sharp chin, and she wasn't afraid to get deep inside the character's craziness and make it genuinely repellent. But whatever Close has been and seemed before, she has now undergone one of those alchemical transformations peculiar to the theatre: from the head of a character actress a diva is born.

Backstage, the news hasn't hit yet. The Close you meet in her dressing room is a tiny, unassuming creature in a flannel shirt and black leggings; her hair is short and blond with gray streaks; she has no makeup and no eyebrows, and she looks ten years younger than her age, which is forty-seven. People have often spoken of her as humorless and standoffish. From what I saw, she is, on the contrary, kind of giggly: during our conversations, whenever a propman or a dresser wandered by she would yell out a quip, or leap up to engage him in some sassy banter, giggling until she gasped. She had a sisterly, roughhousing quality that I associate with big Yankee families, but she could also, unlike many actors, talk fluently about her craft. And, when she did, her hooded eyes took on a distant look, as though she were replaying the acting process in her head.

"It's really weird," she said. "The other day, it was just a run-through dress rehearsal, and I think I gave one of the best performances I've ever given in my life. With no audience. And it takes me a couple of days to get over that, because you don't know where it came from. You know that it was something unusual, and you know that you can't do it again if you try intellectually to conjure it up. You can't. So you have to let it all go. It's almost like channelling—what I would presume channelling would be."

I told her I found it hard to imagine that sort of thing happening on a movie set, and she said, "What's scary about movies—you can be shooting a scene and you know you don't have it. You have to have courage, knowing you're *splaaah*"—she squinched up her face and made her body sag in the chair—"and you keep going. And then maybe there's one take when you have it. The director might have said one word that all of a sudden shifts everything a little bit. And the thing that's scary is that it could very well not happen. And mostly, in movies, once the scene is shot, you don't have it to do over again."

All of which made theatre sound like a much higher high. "Oh!" she said, sucking in air. "Oh, much! Theatre is the big high, yeah. It's amazing. I think of an audience as the final ingredient. It was kind of a wonderful revelation when I realized that they're not my enemy, they're my collaborator. They're like an energy field, where you link up energies. I don't know the physics of it, but it's amazing to me that somehow, something will go right into somebody's heart from the stage." She suddenly reached out and poked me in the chest. "Now, what is that when that happens?" she said. "Is it molecular? I really think that effective acting has to do literally with the movement of molecules."

Molecules aside, I began to wonder what it was that was going through Close's mind onstage. When I asked her, she pondered for a moment, and then said, "There always has to be a piece of yourself somewhere there, watching out." She trailed off, pondered a little more. "The first time you see Norma, she's in a state of real grief, because her monkey has died. And that's all I think about up there. She gets very fragile, so for me everything comes from that—how she walks, how she enters thinking the undertaker has arrived. I'm in a state of grief."

The way she shifted from third to first person caught my attention. Did she mean that Glenn Close, not Norma Desmond, was the one tearing herself up over a stuffed chimp?

"Glenn Close is onstage thinking, If they start applauding, how far do I keep walking down? Should I do a slight hesitation? Where will my line fit in when the applause ends?" She sighed. "It's a weird process, it really is."

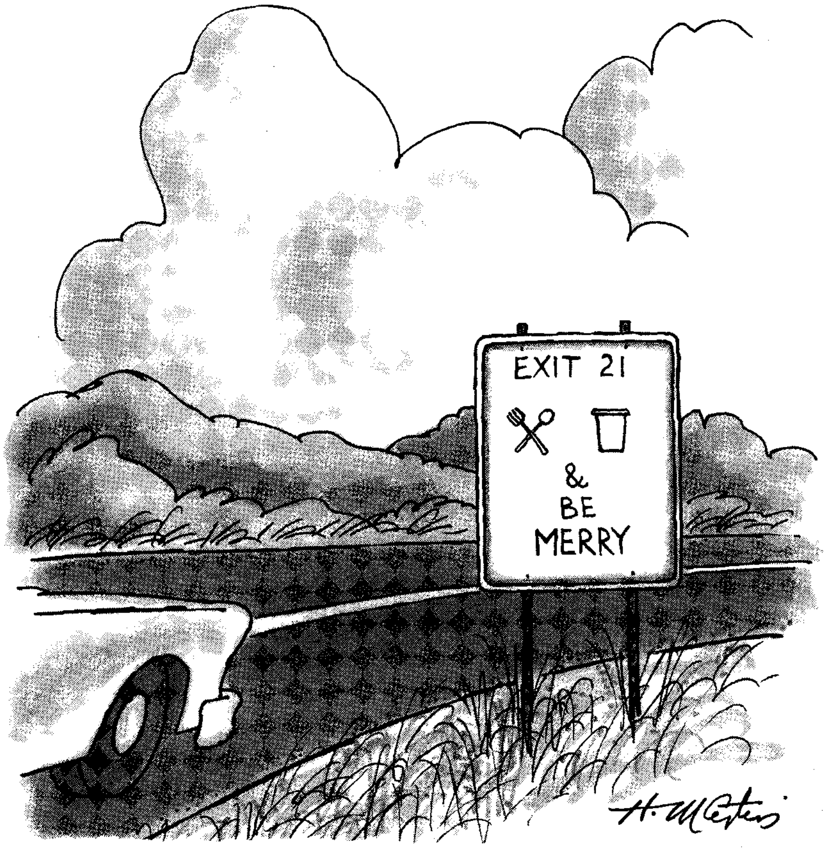
Indeed. Her description put me in mind of the bored wife who mentally riffles through her shopping list while placating her husband with passionate moans. Is the passion of Norma Desmond all show? "The way I work, I emotionally imagine myself into the character, so that the character's thoughts elicit real emotion in me," she said. "I try not to impose something I've done: Oh, my dog got killed, so my character will cry. I find that too confusing. Sometimes I will use certain images, if I need to. I tend to do that more in movies, because you don't have so much time. When I was doing 'House of the Spirits,' there was a scene where I was supposed to be sobbing throughout the whole scene. And I know I could have done it technically. I mean"—and she let her face crumple and began sobbing piteously. It was very convincing.

Instantly, she brightened again. "But I tend to think that there's some extra something that comes in if you can somehow make it visceral and real," she said. "And how do you do that when you have all these cameras and everybody waiting, you know, and it's terrifying? I find that there's kind of an emotional scanner that goes back and forth looking for something to click in. In this particular scene, I started scanning out of desperation—looking for what would at least begin the crying."

Abruptly, she stopped talking. I asked her what she had found to make her cry, and for a moment her eyes flitted around the room. Then she said, "It's private!" And suddenly she started laughing hard, too hard—almost shrieking with laughter. "I know what it was," she said. "It was the scene when Meryl"—Meryl Streep, who plays a clairvoyant in "The House of the Spirits"—"has sensed the death of her parents. That was the scene where I was supposed to be sobbing through the whole thing. And because it was her parents, I started to think of my own parents. And I got this image of my dad driving across the vastness of Wyoming, where they live now, with Puccini blaring out the window, singing at the top of his lungs. And I got the image of my mom, who's very, very hard of hearing, sitting in her room in Wyoming and seeing the birds but not being able to hear their song anymore." Her voice had grown high and wistful, but now she brought it back down to earth. "I don't *like* to do that," she said. "I always think I'm cheating."

Was there an edge of hysteria in the way she told that story, in her feinting grab at privacy and in her tumultuous laughter when she finally gave in? Certainly some of Close's best film performances—as Alex in "Fatal Attraction," as Sunny von Bülow in "Reversal of Fortune," as Alicia, the managing editor, in "The Paper"—have depended on an easy access to hysteria, on making raucous emotion explode through a cool, Waspy veneer.

And Close is Wasp to the core: she grew up *twelfth* generation on a two-hundred-and-fifty-acre farm near Greenwich, Connecticut—a town her maternal ancestors helped found. Her father's father was a wealthy industrialist, her own father a doctor trained at British schools and then at Harvard. But her parents shunned the country-club world they inherited. When Glenn was seven, they



joined a peculiar fundamentalist Christian organization called Moral Re-Armament; shortly thereafter, they left Connecticut to establish a string of jungle clinics in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire). The children—Glenn, her brother, and her two sisters—were sent to boarding school. And during the sixties, when so many other teen-agers were rebelling against the so-called establishment, Close was rebelling against the rebels. She wound up a member of the arch-conservative singing group Up With People, and in 1969 she married one of the group's guitarists, Cabot Wade. But by then she was already growing restless. She split from Up With People and Moral Re-Armament and, eventually, from Wade. In 1970, she enrolled at the College of William and Mary, in Virginia, and began taking drama courses.

Over the years, she has largely refused to discuss what she calls "the blank period" of the sixties. "I've talked about it enough, I think," she told me. "It's excruciating. Everybody moves on, but somebody who's always interviewed—you're not allowed to move on. And that whole thing, which Up With People was the culmination of, all those years—it's much too complicated to talk about in an interview." She has been nearly as close-mouthed about her second marriage—in 1984, to the venture capitalist James Marlas—which ended during the shooting of "Fatal Attraction," and about her affair with the movie producer John Starke, with whom she had a daughter, Annie.

Annie is six now, and there were pictures of her all over Close's Minskoff Theatre dressing room. There were also pictures of a tall, blond, bespectacled young man who looked a little like Liam Neeson in one of his tall, blond, bespectacled roles. I knew who he was. At one point, during the show's second act, Close was standing backstage in full Norma Desmond regalia, looking frightful and imperious, when she suddenly turned to me with a coy little smile and said, "I love this part of the show, because I get to watch Steve."

Steve Beers is a production carpenter on "Sunset Boulevard"; he supervises the show's elaborate gimcrackery—the moving sets, the lights, the curtains. He is also Close's boyfriend. They met during the run of "Sunset Boulevard" in Los Angeles, and she is clearly smitten. "He was a very unusual person," Close told me. "And I had been a long time alone." I mentioned the romantic ups and downs that had been documented over the years in the press—her relationships with the actor Woody Harrelson and the hockey star Cam Neely. "They were made to be a lot more than they were," she told me. "It's embarrassing that they think that I had some sort of tabloid affair with Cam. I met him through Woody, but I never had any kind of serious affair with him. All that was totally press stuff. I did date Woody, which was a phase. Boy, I paid for that in the tabloids. But, anyway, meeting Steve was the first great timing in my life, where I was ready and he was ready at the same time. It was like a miracle. Now I'd like to nurture our life outside of work, and that is something I'm really looking forward to. I think I want to use this time to kind of reassess and simplify."

Reassess and simplify? While you're being Norma Desmond eight shows a week? I looked around at the dressing room—at the pictures of Gloria Swanson affixed to Close's mirror, at the wilting flowers on the windowsills and the makeup diagram leaning against the wall, at the turbans on the shelves and the big box of Chloraseptic on the dressing table. For nine months, she was going to be stuck in here getting microphones taped to her forehead; for nine months, she was going to be singing news, nahs, and knees in Kabuki-face. Nine months times eight shows a week—who knows how many grand entrances she would make from that squalid little room at the top of the stairs?

"I have no idea where life will take me after this," she said. "This certainly has put me out of the marketplace for two years." It could also be something of a career killer. In playing Norma Desmond, Close is presenting herself definitively as an older woman, as someone who has lost her appeal. (The high point of Gloria Swanson's career after *she* played Norma Desmond was "Airport 1975.") "I don't know how this will apply to movies except having directors think, Oh, Jesus!" she said. "I always think I'm tempting fate as far as my career goes."

Or, to put it another way, who cares what happens next when you're playing a diva like Norma Desmond? For that is the thing you can't miss if you watch Close backstage, hurtling through costume changes, belting out songs, knocking her body around without any self-consciousness, or even dignity, as though that body belonged less to her than to the company that had built a show around it. What you can't miss is her addiction to acting.

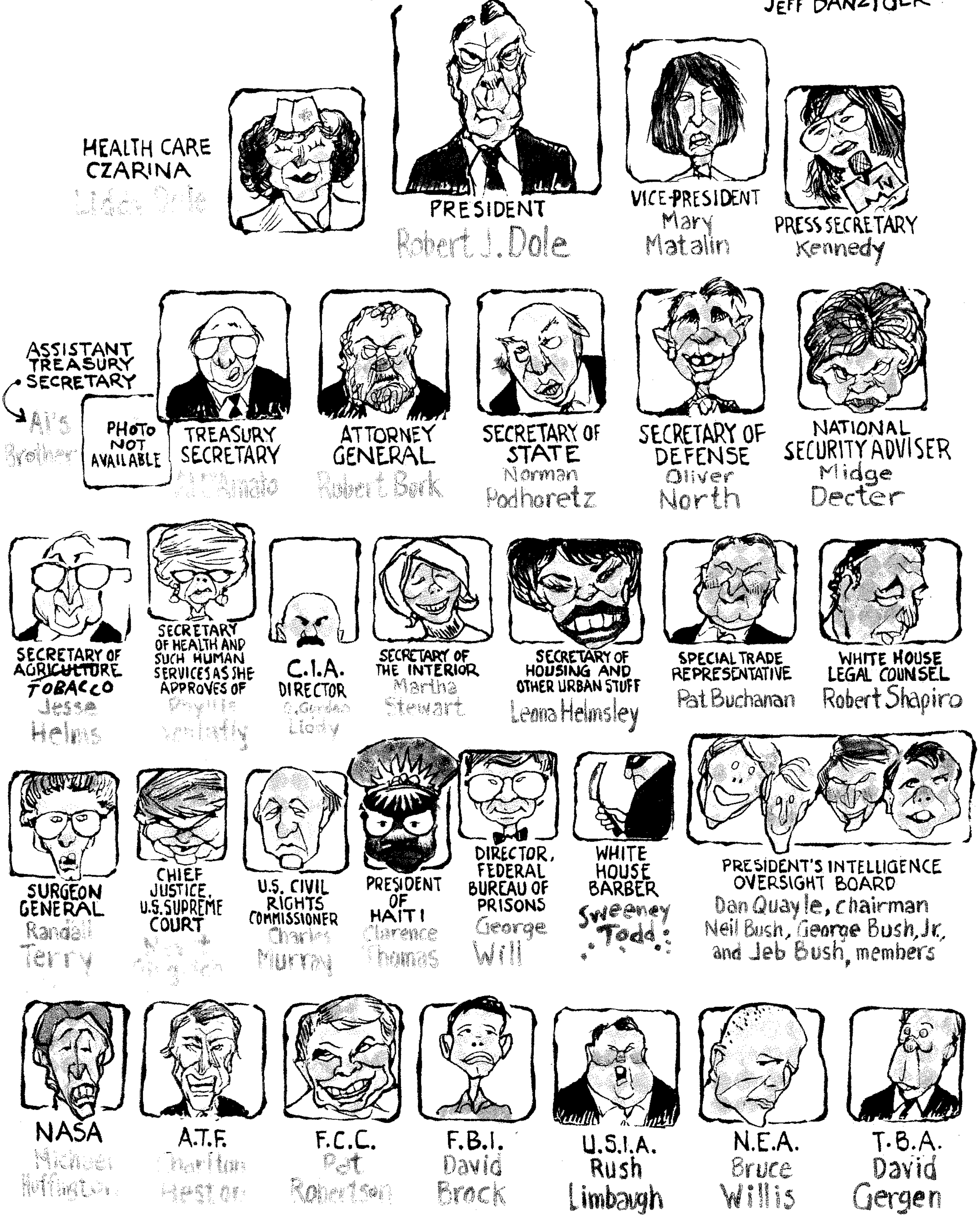
"I get these lapses," she told me. "It's gonna make me sound like I'm some sort of weirdo, but I think any actor will understand. One of my favorite moments in this show is backstage, where I'm waiting after the love duet, and these big towers move offstage, and then these wonderful panels open up way upstage, and the scrim is coming down, and then the mansion starts descending, like this great big mother ship. And you stand backstage, and you see all the backdrops and the struts and the artifice. The audience is seeing the illusion. And there you are, in a kind of limbo in between, seeing both, in a costume that's not you. And sometimes I literally lose who I am for a couple of seconds."

Backstage, a few hours later, I am up in the squalid little room with Lynn Mann and David Brown when three loud shots ring out on the stage below. "For this next change, she's deep into Norma," Mann says. "So we're really quiet when she comes in."

Twenty seconds pass, and then Close flaps through the curtain and into the little room. She is wearing a fright wig, with a lot of scalp and a few tufts of wild, orangey hair. Mann and Brown strip the costume off her, so that she is completely naked from the waist up. She is panting again; her eyes are darting. For a moment, they find mine, but I can tell they see nothing. The woman before me may not be Norma Desmond, but she is also, certainly, not Glenn Close—not the chatty, deceptively mousy character actress I had met a few hours before. The music swells. The dressers finish their pinning and zipping, and Close turns back toward the curtain that separates stage from backstage. Her face is set now, a mask of pride and despair. Norma Desmond is ready for her closeup. ♦

THE BOB DOLE WHITE HOUSE
(EARLY THINKING)

By ALEX BEAM & JEFF DANZIGER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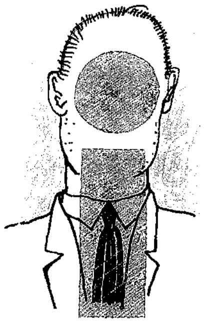
FICTION

MARRYING DAMIAN

BY WILLIAM TREVOR



“I'M going to marry Damian,” Joanna said.

Claire wasn't paying attention. She smiled and nodded, intent on unravelling a ball of garden twine that had become tangled. I said, “Well, that's nice of course. But Damian's married already.”

It didn't matter, Joanna said, and repeated her resolve. Joanna was five at the time.

TWENTY-TWO years later Damian stood on the wild grass, among the cornflowers and the echiums and the lavatera, under the cricket-bat willow that had been a two-foot shrub when Joanna made her announcement. He was wearing blue sunglasses and a powder-blue suit that looked new. In contrast, his tie—its maroon and gold stripes seeming to indicate membership of some club to which almost certainly Damian did not belong—was lank, and the collar of his shirt was frayed. We hadn't been expecting him; we hadn't heard from Damian for years. Since the spring of 1985, Claire afterward calculated, the year after his second divorce, from an American widow in upstate New York. Before that there had been an Englishwoman who lived in Venice, about whom we had never been told very much. When Joanna had declared her childhood intention Damian had been still married to the only one of his three wives Claire and I actually knew: a slender, pretty girl, the daughter of the Bishop of Killaloe. We had known her since the wedding; I'd been Damian's best man.

I was actually asleep when Damian walked into our garden all those years later, and I think Claire was, too. We were lolling in deck chairs, Claire's spaniels stretched out under hers, avoiding the afternoon sun. “Yes,” Damian said. “It's Damian.”

We were surprised, but perhaps not much: turning up out of the blue had always been his style. He never telephoned first or intimated his intention by letter or on a postcard. Over the years he had arrived in all seasons and at varying times of day, once rousing us at two o'clock in the morning. Invariably he brought with him details of a personal disaster which had left him with the need to borrow a little money. These loans were not paid back; even as he accepted them he made no pretense that they would be.

“Damian!” Claire hugged him, laughing, playfully demanding to know what he was doing in that awful suit. I asked him where he'd been and he said oh, a lot of places—Vancouver, Oregon, Spain. Claire made him sit down, saying she was going to make some tea, inviting him to stay awhile. He was the tonic we needed, Claire said, for she's always afraid that we'll slump into dullness unless we're careful. A woman, somewhere, had given him the suit; we both guessed that.

“I wasn't all that well in Spain,” Damian said. “Some kind of sunstroke.”

We are the same age, Damian and I, not young anymore; that day, as we sat together in the garden, we were sixty and a bit, Claire five years younger. She's tall and slim, and I can't believe she'll ever be anything but elegant, but of course I know I may be wrong. When we married she came to live in the country town I've always known, acquiring an extra identity as the doctor's wife and the receptionist at the practice, as the mother of a daughter and a son, the organizer of a playgroup, the woman who first taught the illiterate of the town to read.

Damian, at the first opportunity, fled this neighborhood. On his return to it, the time before this one, he had carried—clearly an affectation—a silver-topped cane, which was abandoned now, no doubt because it drew attention to its own necessity, and Damian inclines toward vanity. Although he sat down briskly in the chair Claire had vacated for him, the protest of a joint caused him, for a single instant, to wince. His light, fair hair is gray in places now, and I don't suppose he cares for that either, or that his teeth have shrivelled and become discolored, nor that the freckles on the backs of his hands form blobs where they have spread into one another, or that the skin of his forehead is as dry as old vellum. But that day there was nothing about his eyes to suggest a coming to terms with a future destined to be different from the past, no hint of a hesitation about what should or should not be undertaken: in that sense Damian remains young.

Even when he was a boy his features were gaunt, giving the impression then of undernourishment. He is angular, but without any of the awkwardness sometimes associated with that quality. In spite of whatever trouble he was having with a joint, he could still, I noticed that day, tidy himself away with natural ease. As always at the beginning of a visit, he was good-humored; moodiness—sometimes a snappish response to questions, sometimes silence—was apt to set in later.

If, in terms of having a profession, Damian is anything, he is a poet, although in all the years I've known him he has never shown me more than a verse or two. Years ago someone told us that Damian once had a coterie of admirers and was still, in certain quarters, considered to possess “a voice” that should be more widely heard. A volume entitled “Slow Death of a Pigeon”—its contents sparse, Claire and I always assumed, for nothing about Damian suggests he is profligate with his talent—appears to represent all he has so far chosen for posterity. In time we would receive a copy of “Slow Death of a Pigeon,” he promised on one of his visits, but none arrived.

“Well, yes, it was that. Something like it,” he was saying, slightly laughing, when I returned with another deck chair after Claire had brought out the tea things. He had repeated all he'd told me

FILIP PAGOWSKI

about his sunstroke and the lack of anything of interest in Vancouver. Yes, he was confessing now, a relationship with a woman had featured in his more recent travels, had somehow been the reason for them. There was no confirmation that the powder-blue suit had been a gift. Damian wouldn't have considered that of interest.

"I thought I'd maybe die," he said, returning to the subject of his sunstroke, but when I asked him what he'd taken for it, what treatment there had been, he was vague.

"Bloody visions," he said instead. "Goya stuff." In any case, he confidently pronounced, Spain was overrated.

Had the woman been Spanish, I wondered, and thought of dancers, white teeth and a rosebud that was red, black skirts swirling, red ribbons in black hair. I have doctor colleagues who farm a bit, who let the wind blow away the mixture of triviality and death that now and again makes our consulting rooms melancholy places. Others collect rare books, make cabinets, involve themselves in politics, allow gardening or some sport to become a way of life to skulk in. For me, Damian's infrequent visits, and wondering about him in between, were such a diversion. Not as efficacious as afternoons on a tractor or searching out a Cuala Press edition of Yeats, but then by nature I'm lazy.

"A chapter closed?" Claire was saying.

"Should never have been opened."

Later, in the kitchen, I decanted the wine and Claire said the lamb would be enough, with extra potatoes and zucchini. We heard Joanna's car and then her voice exclaiming in surprise and Damian greeting her.

I carried a tray of drinks to the garden. Damian's small black suitcase, familiar to us for many years, was still on the grass beside his deck chair. I can see it now.

THE visit followed a familiar pattern. In the small suitcase there were shirts and underclothes and socks in need of laundering, and when they had been through the washing machine most of them were seen to be in need of repair. Damian, besides, was penniless; and there was the request that if anyone telephoned him—which was, he said, unlikely since, strictly speaking, no one knew his whereabouts—his presence in our house should be denied.

When we were children, Damian and I had played together at Doul, the gray, half-derelict house where his Aunt Una had brought him up. Doul is no longer there, having been sold to a builder for the lead of its roof and later razed. Damian's Aunt Una had drunk herself to death in a house trailer. I was actually there when her head jerked suddenly to one side on the pillow, the visible indication of her demise. She'd been, in our childhood, a vague presence in that old house and its lost garden, tall and handsome yet somehow like a ghost of someone else: it was said that she was Damian's mother. People who remembered her advent, with an infant, in the neighborhood, said the house had been bought for her by the man who'd made her pregnant, buying her silence also.

I learned all that later. When Damian and I were eight, his Aunt Una was known to me as his aunt and there was never, afterward, a reason to doubt that she was. He and I were sent away to different schools—the seducer from the past said to have obliged in this way, also, where Damian's boarding fees were concerned—but our friendship nonetheless continued. Damian—like a scarecrow sometimes because it was never noticed by his Aunt Una that he grew out of his clothes—was easy company, hard to dislike, an antidote to the provincial respectability I grew up in. We wandered about the countryside; we hung about point-to-points; when we were older we went to Friday dance halls if one of us had money; we dreamed of romance with Bettina Nowd, clerk in the Munster & Leinster Bank. Abruptly, our ways parted, and remained apart for a long time: when Damian, at nineteen, left the neighborhood he did not return for fourteen years, by which time his Aunt Una was dead and her house gone. It was said he hadn't written to her, or communicated in any way during that time, which was surprising because he was always fond of her. But as I heard nothing from him either it's perhaps less odd than it seems. For Damian, perhaps, the vacuum of people's absence cannot be filled by any other means. During that fourteen years he and I met only once, at Killaloe at the first of his weddings.

"You know, I'd like to see Doul again," he said the day after he'd appeared in his powder-blue suit. So we went there, where there was nothing to see, not even the house trailer his Aunt Una died in. Beneath the brambles that grew everywhere, and the great swaths of nettles, there might have been remains of some kind, but if there were the naked eye could not discern them. When we walked on a bit, there were the walls of the kitchen garden, ivy-clad in places, fallen away in others.

"You couldn't build Doul again," I pointed out when he said he'd like to. "Not without a fortune, Damian."

He muttered something, and for the first time sounded disagreeable. There was some kind of complaint, a protest about his continuing lack of means, and then: "The avenue . . . the gates . . ."

A fragment from a poem? I wondered. Sometimes in Damian's conversation words stand isolated and out of context, as though they do not belong in conversation at all.

"The house," I began.

"Oh, not the house as it was."

Claire's spaniels sniffed about for rabbits. As we stood there, the September sun felt hot. Damian believes in the impossible and when we were younger occasionally inspired me with his optimism: that nothing could be easier than poaching salmon, that a bookie or a publican would accept an I.O.U., that Bettina Nowd had the love light in her eyes. It was an endearing quality then; I wasn't so sure about its being one that had endearingly endured. I felt uneasy about this talk of coming back. During the companionship of our youth there had never been an attempt to borrow money, since there was none to lend; nor was advantage taken of small politenesses, since politeness was not then readily on offer. The threat of a neighbor with a fly-by-night's presumptions was just a little alarming.

"Who owns it now?" he asked, and I told him: the son of the builder who had stripped the roof of its lead.

The cawing of rooks and the occasional bark of the dogs were the only sounds. It had always been quiet at Doul; that tall, beautiful woman floating about from room to room or picking the last of the mulberries; bees in the honeysuckle.

"What?" I said, again unable to catch

THE GLASS FLOOR
Maybe if I just sit very, very still, nothing will happen.

Damian's murmur. Still moody, he did not reply directly, but seemed to say that the muse would not be silent here.

I HAD ceased to practice on my sixtieth birthday, feeling the time had come, although previously I had imagined I could go on more or less forever, as my father had in this same house, to his dying day. "What'll it be like?" Damian used to ponder when we were young, the world for him an excitement to investigate after a small, familiar town in southwest Ireland. Both of us, of course, knew what it would be like for me: we knew my father's house, its comfortably crowded rooms, its pleasant garden; we knew the narrow main street, the shopkeepers, priests, and beggars, the condensed-milk factory, the burned-out cinema, the sleepy courthouse, the bright new hospital, the old asylum, the prison. But neither of us could conjecture a single thing about what lay ahead for Damian.

"It's all right, is it?" Damian asked me on the way back from Doul that day, his mood gregarious again, suddenly so, as if he had remembered who I was. "Doing nothing these days is all right?"

"Yes, it's all right."

In fact, it was more than that: all sorts of things were easier in retirement. People weren't patients anymore. Met by chance on the street, they conversed with less embarrassment, while privately I registered that Raynaud's was at work or that Frolich's syndrome would not now be reversed. In ordinary chat, awkward secrets were not shared with me; more likely I was shown an adolescent's face and then reminded I'd been the first to see it as an infant's; or informed of athletic achievements in children who had grown up, or of success in other ways, and weddings that were planned. Worries were held back, not coinage for me now, as bad backs weren't, or stitched wounds or blood pressure, the smell of sickness in small back bedrooms.

"Yes, it's fine," I said in the bar of Traynor's Hotel. "And you?" I added. "Nowadays, Damian?"

Again he became morose. He shrugged and did not answer. He stared at the back of a man who was standing at the bar, at the torn seam of a jacket. Then he said, "I used to think about Doul. Wherever I was, I'd come back to that."

From his tone, those thoughts about the place of his youth had been a comfort, occurring—the implication was—at times of distress or melancholy. Then Damian said, as if in response to a question I had not asked, "Well yes, an inspiration."

He had finished the whiskey in his glass. I went to the bar, and while the drinks I ordered were poured I was asked by Mr. Traynor about our son, now a doctor in New South Wales, and about Joanna, who had returned to the town six months ago to work in the prison. "You'd be delighted she's back here," Mr. Traynor conjectured, and I agreed, although pointing out that sooner or later she would move away again. I smiled, shrugging that away, my mind not on the conversation. Could Doul have been a poet's inspiration for all these years? I wondered. Was that the meaning I was supposed to find in what had been so vaguely stated?

"I thought I recognized him," Mr. Traynor next remarked, his voice kept low, after I had answered his query about who Damian was. "How're you doing these times?" he called out, and Damian called back that none of us was getting younger.

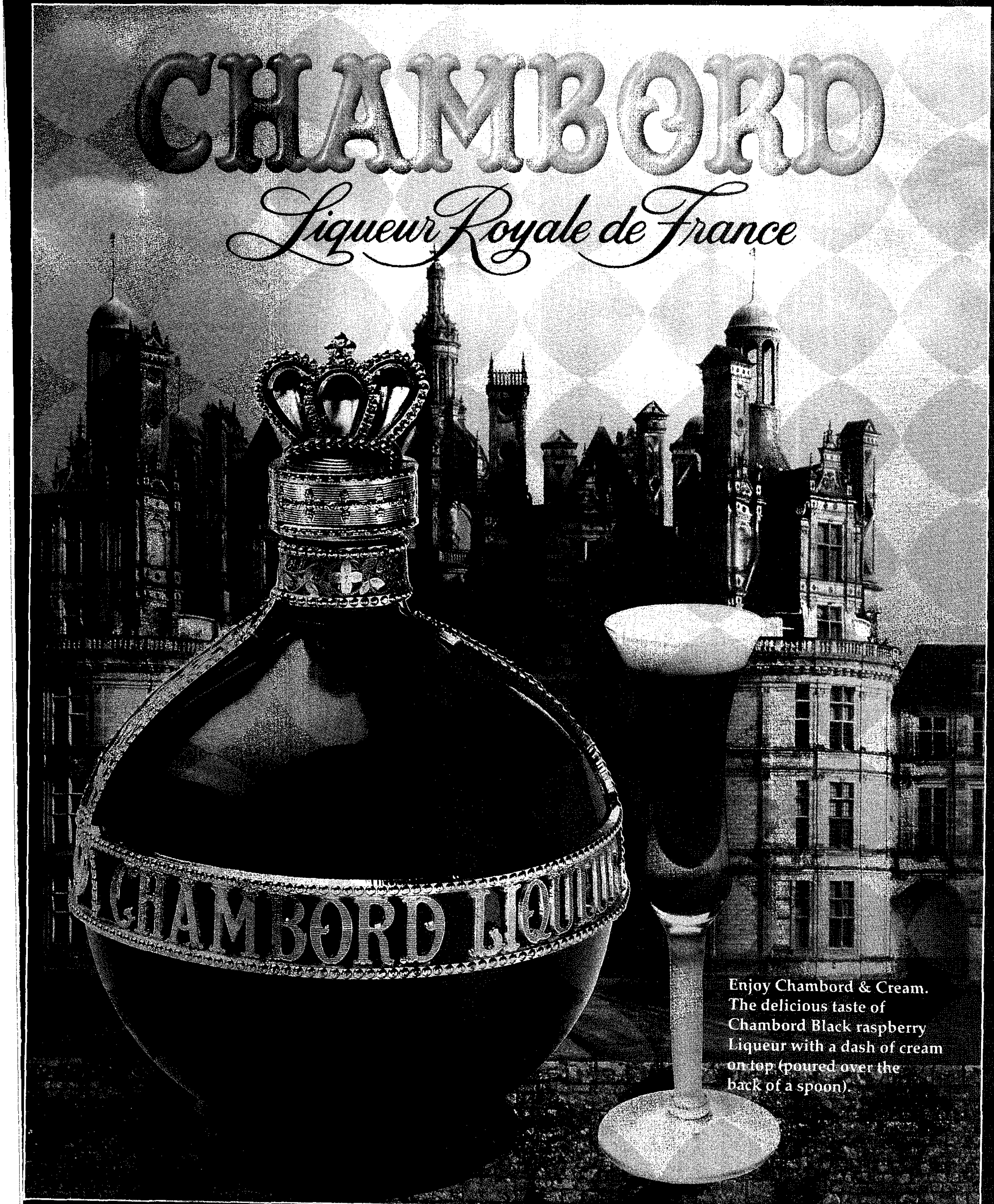
"God, that's the truth in it," Mr. Traynor agreed, wagging his head in a pretense that this hadn't occurred to him before.

I picked up my change and made my way back to the table where we sat.

"Nothing grand," Damian said, as if my absence hadn't interrupted what we'd been saying. "Any little hovel that could be knocked together. There are things. . . ." He let the sentence trail away. "I have the time now."

I sipped my drink, disguising amusement: all his life Damian had had time. He ran through time, spending it as a spendthrift, wallowing in idleness. Perhaps poets always did, perhaps it was the way they had to live; I didn't know.

"Stuff accumulates," Damian con-



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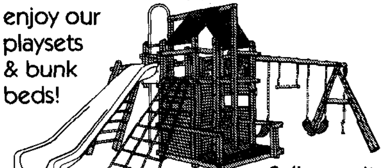

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fided, “unsaid. Oh, it’s just a thought,” he added, and I concluded, with considerable relief, that this was probably the last we’d hear of his morning’s whim. After all, there was no sign whatsoever of his being in possession of the necessary funds to build the modest dwelling he spoke of, and personal loans could be resisted. “Silly old Damian,” Claire murmured when I told her, with the indulgent smile that talk of Damian always drew from her.

THEN, quite suddenly, everything was different. Perhaps in the same moment—at dinner two days later—Claire and I were aware that our daughter was being charmed all over again by the man she had once picked out as the man she would like to marry. To this day, I can hear their two voices in my dining room, and Damian laughing while Claire and I were numbed into silence. To this day I can see the bright flush in Joanna’s cheeks.

“And are you settled, Joanna?” Damian asked. “Here?”

“For the time being,” Joanna said.

The prison is two miles outside the town, a conglomeration of stark gray buildings behind high gray walls, which occasionally I have visited during an epidemic. *Ad sum ard labor*, a waggish inmate has carved on a sundial he made for the governor, a tag that is a talking point when visitors are led around. Joanna has worked in prisons in Dublin and in England; she came here because from conversations she has had with me she was aware that rehabilitation—which is her territory—wasn’t being much bothered with. It was a challenge that here on the doorstep of the town she was born and grew up in were circumstances that professionally outraged her.

“I remember sharing a railway carriage with a man who’d just been released from jail,” Damian said. “He robbed garages.”

In Joanna’s view, a spell in prison was the offer of another chance for the offender, a time to come to terms with the world and with oneself. She was an optimist; you had to be, she insisted.

“Lonely wayside garages,” Damian said. “A child working the pumps.”

“Did he say—”

“All he said was that he didn’t intend to get caught the next time.”

Beneath these exchanges there was something else, a tremor that was shared; a tick answered another tick, fingers touched although a dinner table separated them. I pushed my knife and fork together; and Claire said something that nobody heard and went to the kitchen.

Joanna is small and dark-haired, and pretty. She has had admirers, a proposal of marriage from a mapmaker, a longish affair with an ornithologist, but her passionate devotion to her work has always seemed to make her draw back when there was pressure that a relationship should be allowed the assumption of permanence. It was as though she protected her own dedication, as though she believed she would experience a disloyalty in herself if she in any way devoted less time and energy to her work. Recidivists, penitents, old lags, onetime defaulters, drug pushers, muggers, burglars, rapists: these were her lovers. She found the good in them, and yet, when telling us about them, did not demand that we should, too. It has never been her way to lecture, or stridently to insist, and often people are surprised at the intensity of her involvement, at the steel beneath so soft a surface. Neither Claire nor I ever say so, but there is something in our daughter that is remarkable.

Across the dinner table that evening she became demure. There was obedience in her glance, and respect for every ordinary word our visitor uttered, as though she would blindly have acted as he dictated should his next words express a desire. I followed Claire into the kitchen, carrying plates and dishes. “I always wanted to,” Joanna was saying, drawn out by Damian in a way that was not usual in his conversation. “I never thought of doing anything else.”

We didn’t speak, Claire and I, in the kitchen. We didn’t even look at each other. It was our fault; we had permitted this stroke of fate to stake its claim. The suitable admirers—the dark-haired mapmaker, the ornithologist, and others—were not what a retriever of lost causes, a daily champion of down-and-outs, had ever wanted. In the dining room the voices chatted on, and in the kitchen we felt invaded by them, Claire and I, she tumbling raspberries into a blue glass bowl, I spooning coffee into the filter. "I remember hearing you'd been born," Damian was saying in the dining room when we returned.

It was I who had told him. I delivered Joanna myself; Claire and I heard her first cry in the same moment. "A girl," I said when Damian arrived six months later for one of his visits, and we drank my whiskey on a bitter January night. "How nice to have a daughter," he murmured when we gazed down at the cot by Claire's bedside. And he was right: it was nice having a girl as well as a boy, nice being a family. Even then, two different personalities were apparent: our son's easygoing, rarely ruffled, Joanna's confident. At five and six, long-legged and determined, she won the races she ran because insistently she believed she could. Oh no, she wouldn't, she asserted when it was pointed out that she would tire of looking after the unattractive terrier she rescued after tinkers left it behind. And for years, until the creature died in old age, she did look after it.

"It was snowing outside," Damian reminisced in the dining room. "Black Bush was what we drank, Joanna, the night your father and I wet the baby's head."

His fingernails were rimmed: ash from the cigarettes he was smoking, as he always does, between courses. Once upon a time, years ago, he affected a cigarette holder. He had sold it, he told Claire when she asked, and we guessed it had been another gift from a woman, sold when the affair was over.

"Raspberries, Damian?" Claire offered.

He smiled his acceptance. He placed his cigarette, still burning, on a side plate, and poured cream on the fruit. I wondered if children had been born to him; I hadn't wondered that before. I imagined, as I often had, his public-house life in London, some places he could not enter because of debts, late-night disagreements turning sour. I had a feeling that his travels to other places—so often mentioned—had always been of brief duration, that London was where he had mostly belonged, in seedy circumstances. I imagined lodgings, rent unpaid, possessions pawned. How often had there been flits in the small hours? Were small dishonesties a poet's right? And yet, I thought as well, he was our friend and almost

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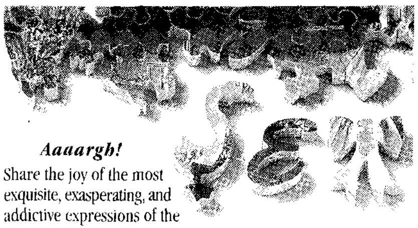

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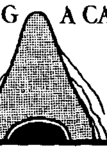

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always had been. He'd cheered our lives.

"Damian's tired of London," Joanna said. "He's going to live at Doul again."

IN the night, believing me to be asleep, Claire wept. I whispered, trying to console her. We didn't say to each other that shock came into this, that we must allow a little time to calm us. We lay there, remembering that not much longer than twenty-four hours ago Claire had said our friend was the tonic we needed. On all his visits we'd never been dismayed to see him, and he couldn't help being older now, less handsome than he had been, his grubbiness more noticeable. He was, at heart, as he had always been. It was unfair to say he wasn't, just because he had cast a spell in our house. We'd always known about those spells. We'd read between the lines, we hadn't been misled.

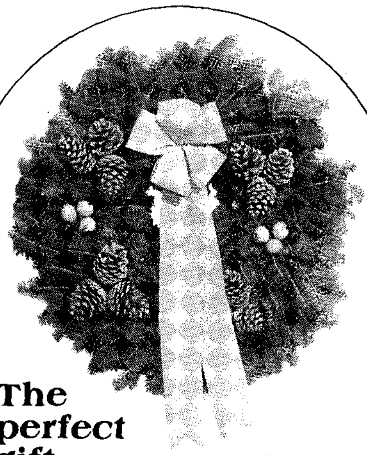
Marriage was what we dreaded, although neither of us used the word. It was not because Damian had so often confessed he liked to marry that our melancholy threw up this stark prediction; it was because Joanna was Joanna. We might be wrong, we felt each other thinking; a tawdry love affair might be enough. But we did not believe it and neither of us suggested the consolation of this lesser pain. Nor did we remind each other that Joanna, all her life, had been attracted by the difficult, nor did we share it with each other when in the dark we were more certainly aware that there had been no challenge in her relationship with the mapmaker or the ornithologist, or with any of her suitable admirers. Perhaps, that night, we knew our daughter a little better, and perhaps we loved her just a little more. She would succeed where other women had failed; already we could hear her offering this, already we sensed her not believing that the failure could lie anywhere but with those other women. "I'm going to marry Damian," the childish silliness brightly echoed, and with it our amusement.

Had he come to us this time with a purpose? Claire asked when she ceased to weep. Did he intend our daughter to earn his living for him, to tend him in the place of his childhood, cosseting his old man's frailties? Had his future lit up suddenly on a London street, the years ahead radiant as a jewel in his imagination? "I'll tell them," had our daughter said already, planning to sit us down, to pour out drinks in celebration? She would break the news that was not news, and we'd embrace her, not pointing out that Damian couldn't help destroying his achievements. And she would hurry to him when he next appeared and they would stand together as lovers do. We could not foretell the details after that, and quite suddenly the form the relationship might take in time hardly seemed to matter anymore: enough of it was there already. "Are we being punished?" Claire asked, and I didn't know if we were or not, or why we should be punished, or what our sin was.

We didn't want that night to end. We didn't want to feel, again, the excitement that had crept into our house, that passed us by and was not ours. It was not in Damian's nature to halt an adventure that was already under way, not in his nature to acquire from nowhere the decency that would forbid it to proceed. His bedroom would not be empty when morning came, the small suitcase gone, a note left on his bedside table. "Remember the others?" Claire whispered in the dark, and I knew whom she meant without having to think—the daughter of the Bishop of Killaloe, the widow from upstate New York, the Englishwoman in Venice, and other nameless women mentioned by our friend in passing.

Ill suited, we said, when we learned that the first of his marriages had fallen apart, and were too busy in those busy days to be more than sorry. We had hardly wondered about the fate of the bishop's daughter, and not at all about the American widow, except to say to each other that it was typical of Damian to make the same mistake twice. And when the Englishwoman left him it was a joke. Old reprobate, we said. Incorrigible.

The first streaks of dawn came flickering in, the birds began. We lay there silent, not trusting ourselves to comment on this past that the present had thrown up. The bishop's daughter—younger than Joanna was now—smiled in her wedding dress, and I felt again the warm touch of her cheek when I kissed it, and heard her reply to my good wishes, her shy voice saying she was happier than she deserved to be. And a face from a photograph we'd once been shown was the oval face of the American, dark hair, dark eyes, lips slightly parted. And the face of the Englishwoman was just a guess, a face contorted in a quarrel, made



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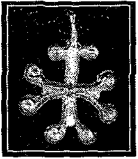

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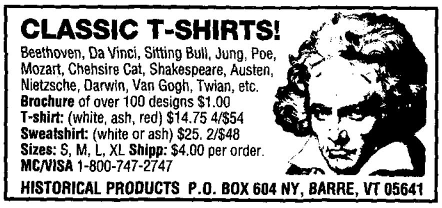

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bitter with cold tears. The shadows of other men's wives, of lovely women, girls charmed, clamored for attention, breaking from their shadows, taking form. Old reprobate.

"I think I'll go and talk to her." Claire's voice was hushed in the twilight, but she didn't move, and I knew that already she had changed her mind; talking would make everything worse. Eighty-one, Claire said: he would be eighty-one when Joanna was forty-eight.

I didn't calculate. It didn't matter. I thought we might quarrel, that tiredness might bring something like that on, but we didn't. We didn't round on each other, blaming in order to shed guilt, bickering as we might have once, when upsets engendered edginess. We didn't because ours are the dog days of marriage and there aren't enough left to waste: dangerous ground has long ago been charted and is avoided now. There was no point in saying, either, that the damage we already sensed would become entertainment for other people, as damage had for us.

"I'll make tea," I said, and descended the stairs softly as I always do at this early hour so as not to wake our daughter. Sometime today Damian and I might again call in at Traynor's; I might, in sickening humility, ask for mercy. I heard my own voice doing so, but the sound was false, wrong in all sorts of ways; I knew I wouldn't say a thing. To insure that our daughter had a roof over her head I would lend whatever was necessary. A bungalow would replace the fallen house at Doul.

The *Irish Times* was half pushed through the letter box; I slipped it out. I brought the tray back to our bedroom, with gingersnap biscuits on a plate because we like them in the early morning. We read the paper. We didn't say much else.

Later that morning Joanna hurried through cornflakes and a slice of toast. Her car started, reversed, then dashed away. Damian appeared and we sat outside in the September sunshine; Claire made fresh coffee. It was too late to hate him. It was too late to deny that we'd been grateful when our stay-at-home smugness had been enlivened by the tales of his adventures, or to ask him if he knew how life had turned out for the women who had loved him. Instead we conversed inconsequentially. ◆

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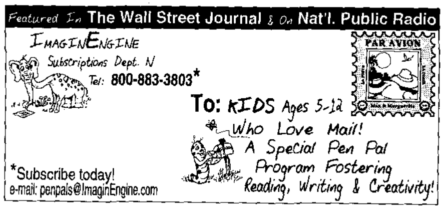

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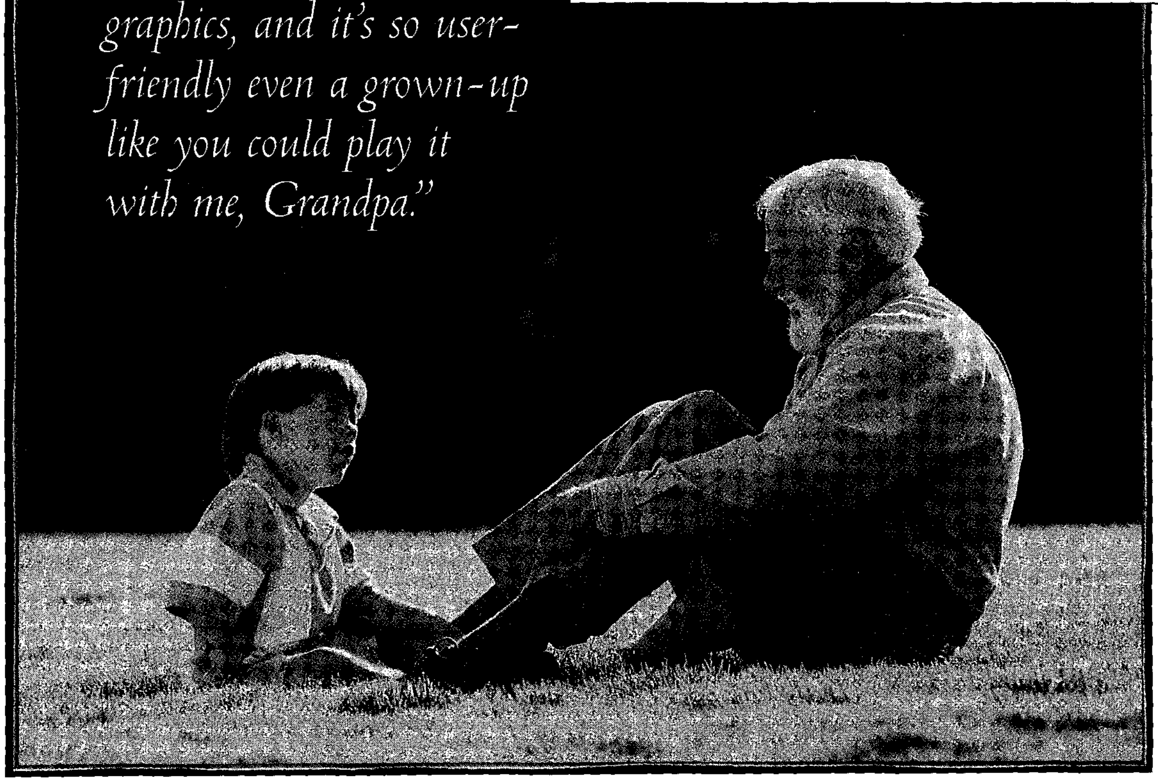

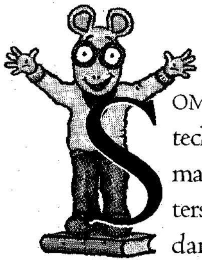

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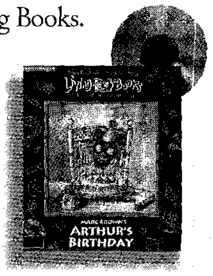

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CUBAN VOICES

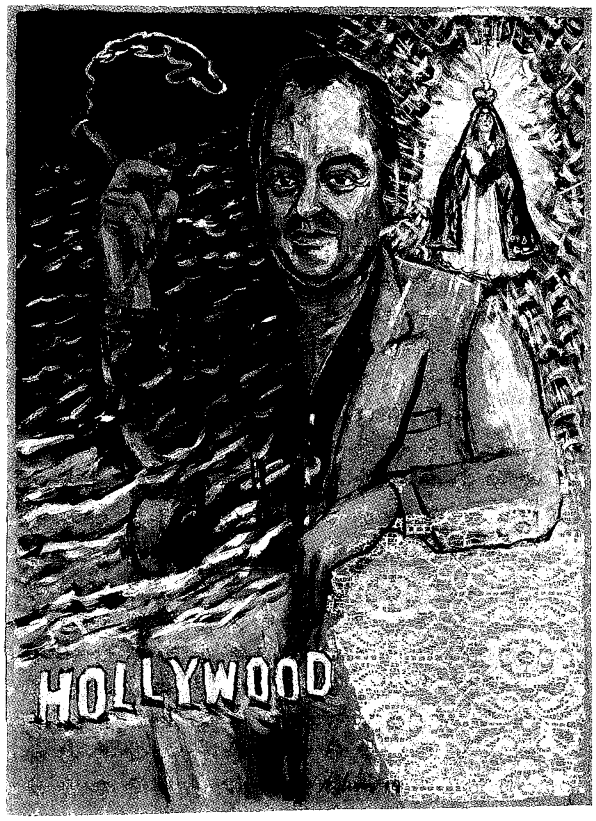
BY JOHN LAHR

EDUARDO MACHADO, who is forty-one, grew up a block from where Ernest Hemingway lived, in a prosperous suburb of Havana near Cojímar. Cojímar is now the place where the boat people set sail for Florida. Machado himself was packed off at the age of eight, not long after Fidel Castro began to seize private property. The ironies of history are not lost on Machado; his privilege and his exile's despair have combined to turn him into a kind of dandy of detachment. Soon, he says, another turbulent volte-face in the island's history will take place: "Cuba will become a condominium. It's the last beach that's not polluted that's three hours away from New York City." Machado's tetralogy "Floating Islands" (at the Mark Taper Forum, in Los Angeles) comprises plays that have been produced individually in the United States over the last decade and have now been rewritten to form a six-hour saga of two families, the Ripolls and the Marquezes, which follows the trajectories of their lives as they struggle to adjust to the various imperialistic ideologies that have colonized the Cuban consciousness. It is an ambitious undertaking, and a welcome one in a parochial American society, whose collective notion of Cuba is, as Machado says, "Desi Arnaz, Fidel, and five minutes of 'Godfather II.' "

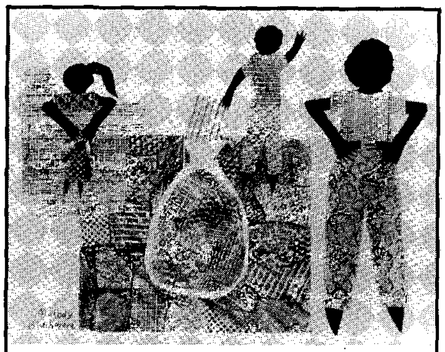
Machado is attempting a hard dramatic feat: to write at once a comedy of manners and a chronicle of a culture's alienation. His is a landscape of regret which wants to avoid both nostalgia and the exotic, usually the only kinds of Latino stories that Americans get to hear. The stylistic task Machado has set himself is to somehow straddle naturalism and farce, engagement and disenchantment. Passion and isolation are part of his metabolism; the title "Floating Islands" also refers to Machado's own panicky sense of separation from life. "The more I've worked on these plays over the last two months, the more I feel totally alone in my point of view," he says. "There are moments of great panic that no one sees anything quite the way I see it. I always feel that I'm on top of the mountain and there's nothing around. All that I have to hold, really, is my plays. That's my only history; and it's a history that I've made up. I'm not connected to anything else."

Machado's characters are political ideas in search of a performing style. In "The Modern Ladies of Guanabacoa," which is set between 1928 and 1931, the old attitudes of Spanish imperialism—especially patriarchy and Catholicism—are at loggerheads with the irresistible new tug of American capitalism, just across the water. Here the conflict between Maria Josefa Ripoll (the excellent Miriam Colón) and her daughter, Manuela (Marissa Chibas), is about the liberated manners of Anglo society (the chic of short hair, soigné cigarette-smoking) and the Old World constraints of Church and family. Manuela still has to be chaperoned, and her mother has bridal worries. "Ramon and you were engaged for seven years, then you didn't get married," Maria Josefa says, afraid that her daughter may be perceived as spoiled goods. "It's not my fault, Mama," Manuela says. "He died." Machado takes every opportunity to tease Maria Josefa's petit-bourgeois faith in propriety. When she hears that the wife of her weak son, Mario, has been seen tangoing with a stranger, Maria Josefa crosses herself. "The tango," she says. "Oh, help us, sweet blessed heart of Jesus Christ." Maria Josefa is the family Sherpa: serving, carrying, washing, and waiting on every whim of her husband and her three sons. Eventually, Maria Josefa learns that her husband, Arturo (Victor Argo, in a flat performance), is a philanderer, but at the end of the play, after he has been gunned down under mysterious circumstances, she says,

FELIX PADRON



Eduardo Machado: His "Floating Islands" distills the alienation of a people into a six-hour epic.



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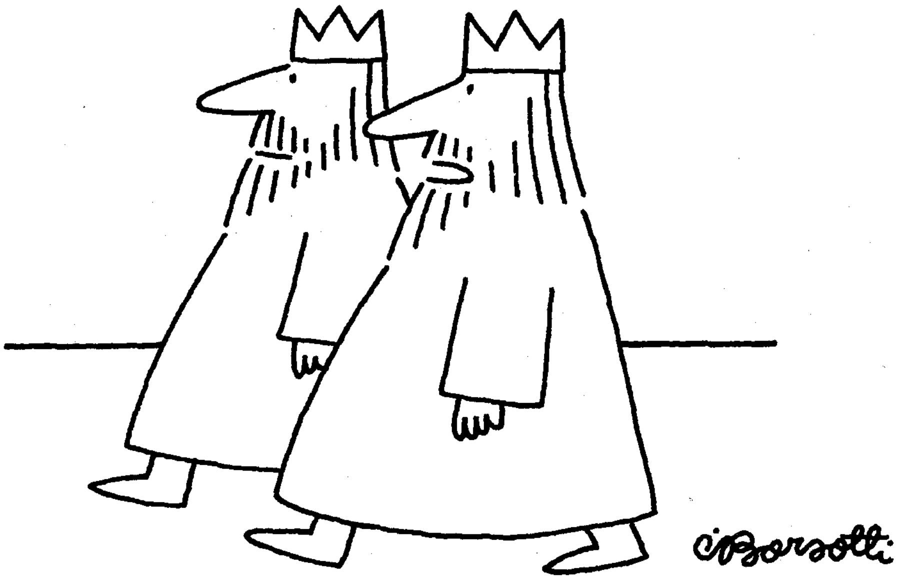
"Arturo, who won? Maria Josefa. Because Maria Josefa is alive." Capitalist success is her revenge for the oppressions of her life, and it arrives in the shape of Manuela's suitor, an upstart orphan named Oscar Hernandez (Joe Urla), who drives a taxi but has the big, resourceful dreams of an American go-getter. "Life is easy," he says. "You just have to make sure you win." And Oscar does. "I can show you how to win in a corrupt world," Oscar says to Arturo. "That's the only option given to man." He persuades Arturo to sell his butcher shop and start a bus company. Profit, not patriarchy, becomes the family's credo as the Ripolls become Cubans of property and style. To expand, the bus company must pay kickbacks to the government. Arturo, a former anarchist, protests this corruption and threatens to sell his share of the business, but the sin of property-owning has already tainted the household. "We'll find justice. By making ourselves rich," says Oscar, who may well be responsible for Arturo's murder. He invokes the name of a sergeant in the military, Fulgencio Batista, who understands business.

In the second play, "In the Eye of the Hurricane," set in 1960, the Ripoll family has advanced to considerable influence under the new and shrewd management of Manuela, who keeps the books, and Oscar, who keeps an eye on the main chance. Batista is already history, and Castro is in the wings. "I don't trust men with beards," says Maria Josefa, now in pearls, a silk dress, and sensible shoes. "They look like they don't bathe." When the government threatens to seize the family's property, during a meal dominated by talk of a sports car that Manuela and Oscar's daughter Sonia is about to buy, privilege and pandemonium gloriously collide. The revolution offers the weak, like Mario, an opportunity to get even. "There's happiness, when everybody loses," he says. "A sense of . . . peace." To change the economic rules in the middle of the game creates a kind of dementia that releases furious energies—a melodrama of materialism, which Machado delightfully turns to farce. Manuela has the workforce at the bus yard stage a sit-in to prevent the Communist *milicianos* from taking over. Oscar, drunk and armed, invokes Latino machismo: he's prepared to die rather than let his buses be driven away. Manuela, who forces him to lie in front of one of the buses, invokes the working people of the world and the righteous image of their protest, which will bring the Americans rushing to their aid. "That's what their society is founded on, the right to advance yourself," she says. But the family's plans, like the subsequent American invasion, turn into a fiasco. The moment displays Machado's theatrical instincts at their strongest, and the Mark Taper's production at its weakest. The buses don't run over the Ripolls; instead, they are backed away. But the director, Oskar Eustis, can't make this sublime stupidity pay off.

Eustis has no feel for the paradoxi-



"I don't know anything about the bell curve, but I say heredity is everything."

cal, and the essential nature of Machado's writing—that quality of combined detachment and hysteria which sends the plays veering from the naturalistic toward the farcical—eludes him. The stylistic uncertainty is partly a reflection of Machado, who is, as he admits, sensationally alienated; but there is much more to these plays than Eustis's heavy hand can winkle out or help Machado clarify. Eustis has no *sabor.* Latino music is no real part of this landscape. He can't find the right weight for scenes—the proper comic gravity, which would give them grace and adequate size. He is more interested in the sociology than in stylization. There's no rhythm or vivacity at play beneath the surface. Machado, like all truly disenchanted souls, has a sense of the frivolous. Eustis doesn't get it, and therefore can't really stage it. In "The Modern Ladies of Guanabacoa," the women kneel to pray for the wounded Arturo and lose their place on their rosaries. Eustis directs the moment as a joke, which kills it: the real humor is in the seriousness of their confusion. Instead of sparkling, Eustis's production gutters, shedding only intermittent flashes of light.

The third play, "Fabiola"—a tale of incest and suicide—tries (and fails) to evoke the exile's world of a life turned upside down by dramatizing moral mayhem. It's in the concluding play, "Broken Eggs"—set at a low-rent wedding reception at a California country club in 1979, at which the now matronly Sonia (well played by Alma Cuervo) is trying to lure back her ex-husband while sending off her completely Americanized daughter, Lizette—that Machado hits his stride. Lizette (played by Kamala Dawson, who adds a lot of oxygen to the evening) is marrying a Jew. "These Jewish people that Lizette is marrying would never understand about witchcraft," Manuela Ripoll, now an old woman, says, suggesting a spell to lure Sonia's ex-husband away from his new Argentine wife. "After all, they don't even believe in Christ." In this play, the exiles—drinking, taking Valium, snorting cocaine, proffering magic powders—act out their alienation. "We *had* to come here," says Sonia's sister-in-law, disdainful of Latin Americans. "They *want* to come here." At one mo-

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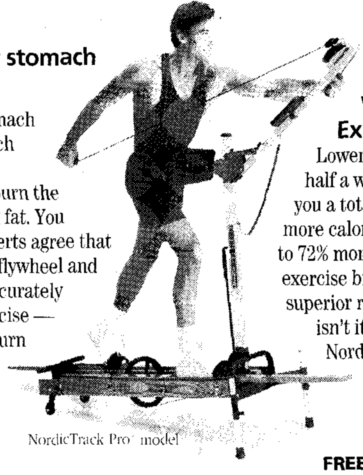

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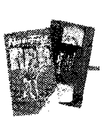

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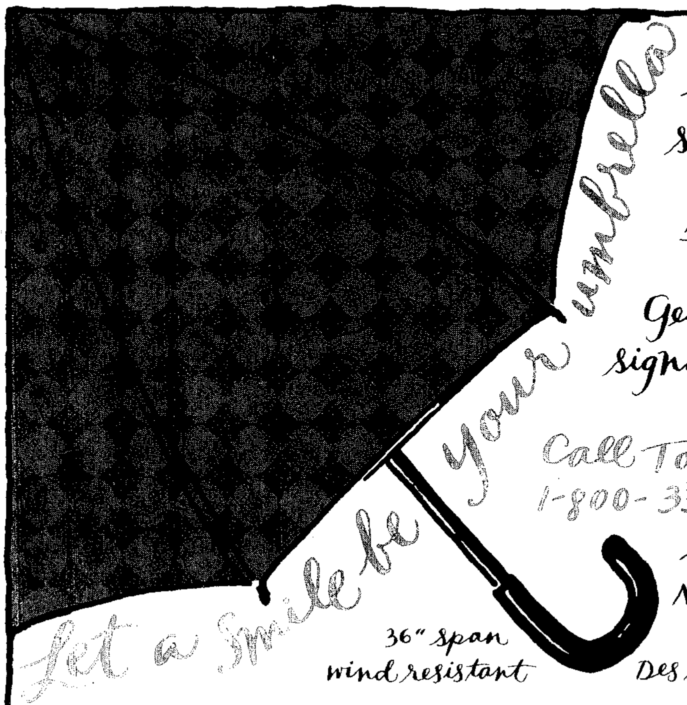

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ment in the midst of the frenetic reception, someone shouts, "A curse on Argentina." The entire cast stops and snaps its fingers in the direction of the offstage wife. The moment broadcasts Cuban solidarity and insecurity, and Machado dramatizes the dispossessed in all their noisy terror and nostalgia: not quite American but not quite Cuban, either. There is gallantry in their grief. Sonia insists on having a dance at the end of the reception. "They're going to kick us out," her daughter Mimi says. Sonia takes Mimi's hand and begins to dance as the curtain falls. "I've been kicked out of better places," she says.

IN contrast to Eustis's production, George C. Wolfe's version of "Blade to the Heat," at the Public Theatre, is a brilliant display of directorial panache, whose stylization turns a piece of mediocre writing, by Oliver Mayer, into a sensational evening of theatre. Here, in what Wolfe describes as "German Expressionism meets Raymond Chandler," the director conjures up the sweat and sexuality of the boxing ring in a series of thrilling tableaux that are layered with an ingenious landscape of sound, which explores the black and Latino world of the late fifties. In slow-motion homage to George Bellows' paintings of boxers, the sinuous fighters duck, dive, jab, and sprawl against the crimson ropes of the arena. Wolfe is directing a movie in real time: trying to make a glance, a body, a spatial relationship fill out an underwritten script that amounts to a treatment. Aided by the superb fight choreography of Michael Olajide, Jr., himself a former middleweight champion, and by the moody, subterranean glow of Paul Gallo's lighting, Wolfe assaults the audience with the swirl of bodies, the play of light, the din of sound. Each punch is scored to conga drums, turning the violence and power of the ring into a visceral experience. "Blade to the Heat" uses boxing to look at the problematic sexuality of a group of people of color. This in itself shatters a dramatic stereotype. In the deconstruction of the nineties, prizefighting, which in the past has been seen variously as a metaphor of the Darwinian struggle, of immigrant upward mobility, and of the psychopathic capitalist need to "make a killing," is

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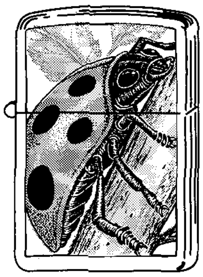

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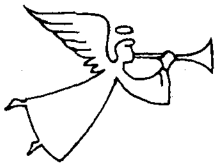

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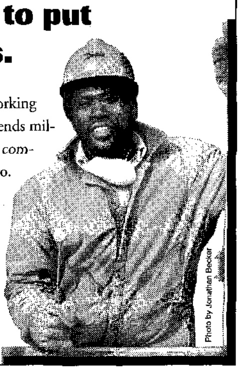

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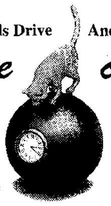

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here depicted as a homoerotic battleground. The boundaries both of sexual identity and of color are blurred. A slick, feline Cuban, Mantequilla Decima (played with great finesse by Paul Calderon), loses his title to the mixed-blood Pedro Quinn (the edgy, sensitive Kamar de los Reyes), who is trying to come to terms with his feelings for a black male singer, Garnet (Carlton Wilborn). The relationships are drawn in sharp, notional, cinematic strokes, which echo the story of Benny (Kid) Paret, who was fatally injured in the ring in 1962, after making a homophobic remark to his opponent at the weigh-in. Quinn is baited for his gayness by another fighter, Wilfred Vinal (Nelson Vasquez). Being beaten by a gay fighter unnerves Decima, throwing his own sexual security in doubt and skewing his relationship with his firebrand girlfriend (the passionate Maricela Ochoa). When Decima gets a rematch with Quinn, he mauls him in the ring, and, in one clinch, in a taunting moment of disgust, kisses the bloodied Quinn on the mouth. The kiss revives Quinn. He pummels Decima to death against the ropes. At the end, Quinn cradles the dead fighter in his lap as cleansing water from the dressing-room shower rains down on them. It's a startling image, and it's typical of Wolfe's emotional, nonlinear storytelling, which often makes up in pace what it loses in penetration. Wolfe gets bolder with each new production, and "Blade to the Heat" shows off his growth. Although nearly everything is imposed on this play, and very little of the impact comes from inside the writing, the cumulative effect is sexy and strong. Wolfe says he likes "soft bodies in a hard environment." And, to judge from the people calling out to the stage on the night I saw the show, so does the audience. ♦

THE THEATRE

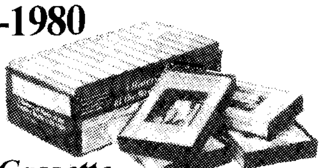
McNALLY MEN, WASSERSTEIN WOMEN

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

THE eight characters in Terrence McNally's new play, "Love! Valour! Compassion!" (terrible! title!), which just opened at his longtime theatrical home, the Manhattan Theatre Club, all happen to be gay, but they connect in ways that almost any nuclear family would envy. Most of them have a long history with each other—they have slept together, roomed together, worked together—and their relationships are rich and resonant. This is no uncomplicated idyll, though: some real ugliness comes out in the course of the play, and there are a number of betrayals, large and small. Yet in this beautifully written work McNally and his actors, under the direction of Joe Mantello, present humbling evidence of what human love is and can be.

The play is set in and around a house in the country in upstate New York on the three holiday weekends that punctuate the summer, and the three acts are punctuated by the men singing, in a-cappella harmony, songs from bygone days—"Beautiful Dreamer," "In the Good Old Summertime," and "Shine On, Harvest Moon." Gregory (Stephen Bogardus), a dancer, whose house we are in, addresses the audience and speaks with pride of his home, which was built in the early years of this century—the "golden age of American housebuilding." At the end of the play, the men, swimming naked in a lake, call up the image of a famous American painting, Eakins' "The Swimming Hole." The feeling of timelessness that imbues this play cuts both ways: as we're absorbing the lulling thought that there were others here before us and there will be others here after us, we're struck sharply by its unavoidable corollary—that we won't be here forever.

Early on, we're told outright that one of the guests, Buzz, who does costumes for Gregory's dance company, won't be here forever: he's H.I.V.-positive. But Buzz himself doesn't talk about it; in fact, his policy is that anyone who mentions



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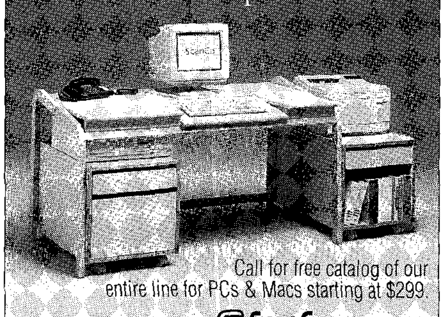

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AIDS this summer has to put five dollars into a kitty. Buzz, in yet another wonderful performance by Nathan Lane, eats, sleeps, and dreams musical comedy. When we first meet him, he's just woken up in a panic: "I was having a musical-comedy nightmare. They were going to revive 'The King and I' for Tommy Tune and Elaine Stritch. We've got to stop them!" (Buzz could have designed the set of "L! V! C!," which is peculiarly "Carousel"-esque: a green hillock on one side of an almost bare stage, and a backdrop of stars against a night sky.) But the character goes beyond camp stereotype. As the summer has progressed, Buzz has found a new boyfriend, who has AIDS, and suddenly his world of happy endings, a world he can "get my hands around," breaks permanently loose from his grasp. In a rage, he shouts:

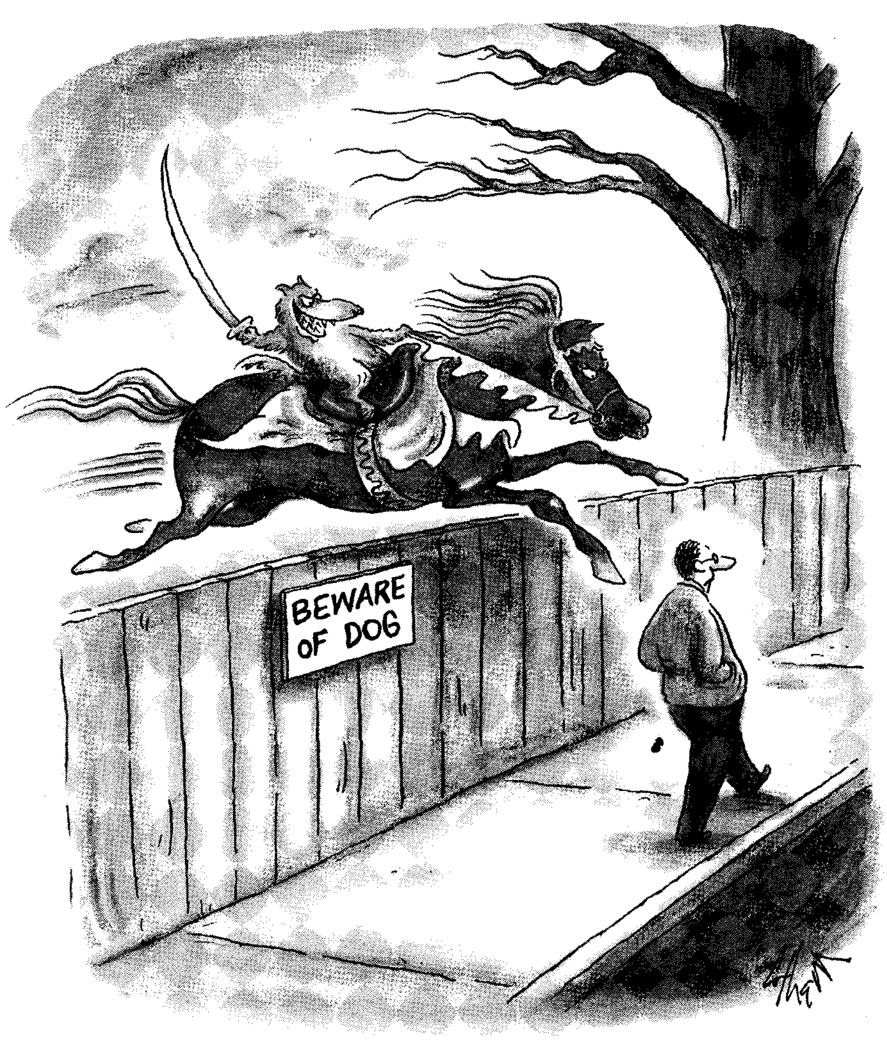
> I want to see a "Sound of Music" where the entire von Trapp family dies in an authentic Alpine avalanche. A "Kiss Me, Kate" where she's got a big coldsore on her mouth. A "Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" where the only thing that happens is nothing and it's not funny and they all go down waiting, waiting for what? Waiting for nothing, waiting for death, like everyone I know and care about is, including me.

It's hilarious, and it's devastating, but it's by *no* means the only painful probing of the wounds that being alive causes. Over a dinner table, the men argue about whether people really can or do care about each other—an argument set off by a discussion of the news photograph of a starving Sudanese child being watched over by a waiting vulture—and an infidelity is confessed at a particularly unfortunate time.

All the actors bring something vivid to their roles. John Glover, playing identical twin brothers—a nasty Englishman and his sweet counterpart (who becomes Buzz's boyfriend in the second act)—goes easily and believably between extremes, and even seems to look different in the two parts. Bogardus, as the aging dancer, whose body has begun to protest, has a kind of embracing tenderness about him; for the duration of the play, you feel that you, too, are a welcome guest in his house. Justin Kirk and Randy Becker, as the youngest members of the group, offer mainly youth and beauty. (And plenty of it: those who complain about the lack of male nudity in the movies need look no further than this play.) Stephen Spinella and John Benjamin Hickey are touching as Perry and Arthur, a lawyer and an accountant, who have been together for fourteen years. "We're role models," Perry says. "It's very stressful." We know by the end of the play that they will stay together. Earlier, we see Perry trimming the hair in Arthur's ears, and Arthur says, only half-jokingly, "You know, if you really think about it, this is what it all comes down to." Perhaps McNally has put his finger on what it is that parents are talking about when they say that all they want is for their children to be happy.

THE revival of Wendy Wasserstein's 1977 paean to Seven Sisterhood, "Uncommon Women and Others," at the Lucille Lortel, made me feel a little sorry for myself and a little guilty, the way you do when you run into an old friend and wonder whether you and she have anything to talk about anymore. Five Mount Holyoke alums who haven't seen each other since they graduated, six years earlier, get together in a restaurant, talk about the ways in which they and the world have and have not lived up to expectations, and reminisce about the days of old. Then the action flashes back to 1972, their senior year, and a world of candlelight dinners, linen napkins, close encounters with Ivy Leaguers, and trepidation about what life holds in store after graduation. I first saw "Uncommon Women" on the public-television series "Great Performances" in May of 1978, a week after I graduated from the Seven Sisters college that's just down the road from Mount Holyoke (which is Wasserstein's alma mater), and it made a big impression on me and some of my friends. It was both upsetting and reassuring—like being alternately thrown in a cold shower and enveloped in a warm flannel nightgown (regulation attire at women's colleges)—for it confirmed our fears about entering the real world and our feelings about the kinds of friendships we had made in college.

Wasserstein, who went on to write "Isn't It Romantic," "The Heidi Chronicles" (which won a Tony and a Pulitzer Prize), and "The Sisters Rosensweig," was in her mid-twenties when she wrote "Uncommon Women," and she had already found the theme that would run through all her work: how women see themselves and how women are affected by how men see them, or how they think men see them. But the play also contains the slick, crowd-



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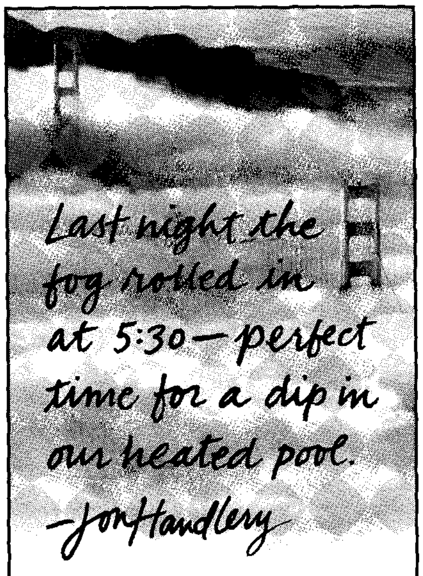
pleasing humor that made Wasserstein, in more ways than one, Broadway-bound. One of the girls, Kate, says to another, Holly, "Did you ever have penis envy?" and Holly replies, "I remember having tonsillitis." When the septuagenarian actress Eva Le Gallienne is mentioned in conversation and Kate asks who she is, Holly says, "She wasn't our year." The play isn't made up only of generic laugh lines—there is some wicked wit, as in Holly's statement that "the only people who have penis envy are other men," and there is a goodly amount of rueful self-awareness—but Carole Rothman has directed the production at the Lortel for maximum laughs and minimum emotional impact. Apart from Jessica Lundy, who is terrific as the flamboyant, unbuttoned Rita (this being 1972, she bursts into a room and announces to her friends that she has tasted her menstrual blood), none of the actors here have anything of the realness or the rawness of the original cast, which included Jill Eikenberry, Swoosie Kurtz, Alma Cuervo, and Glenn Close; the "Great Performances" cast was the same, except that Meryl Streep took Glenn Close's part. Tough shoes to fill, but who said they needed filling? The television version still shows up every now and then, and it's still watchable as a document of some people's experience of the seventies. For the revival, Wasserstein has updated the play by tacking on some "facts" about the characters' current lives, reducing them to their résumés: Samantha, who got married right out of college, now has four children; Kate, the hot-shot lawyer whose career always came first, is now No. 2 at the Justice Department; and so on. It's impossible to avoid the suspicion that we're meant to read "No. 2 at the Justice Department" as Wasserstein's code for "miserable personal life," and just as impossible to avoid the conviction that in reviving and updating "Uncommon Women" the playwright has settled for being stuck in her own shtick. ♦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PHILIP THE BOLD

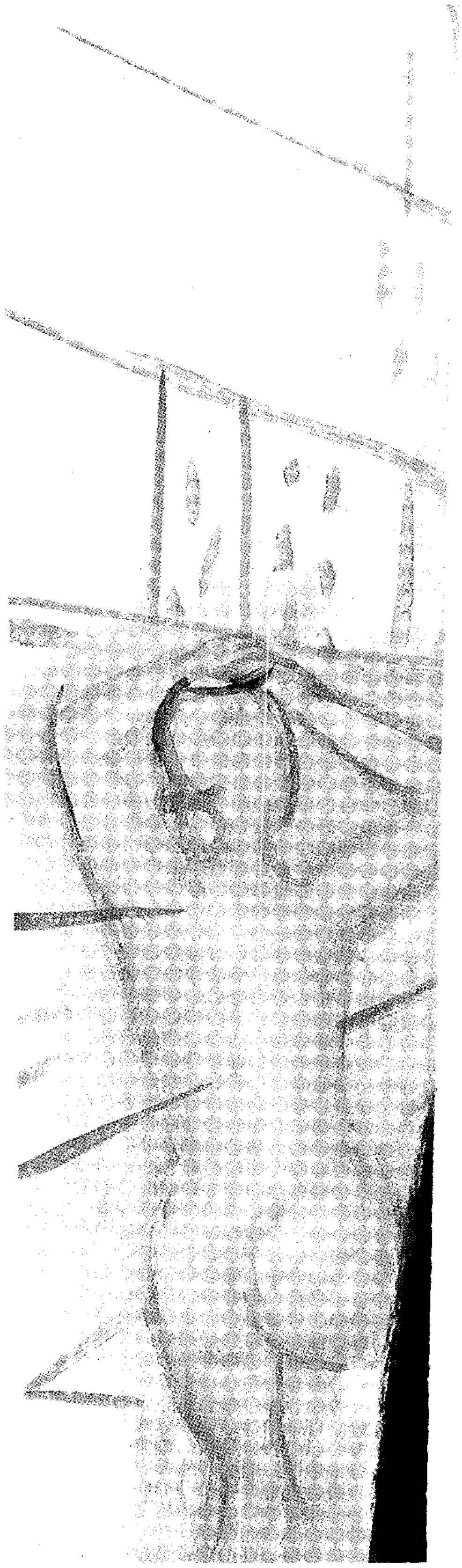
BY BRENDAN GILL

AFTER half a century of friendship with Philip Johnson, I see him as having earned a niche in the pantheon of American eccentrics. It happens—no offense to him!—that the pantheon is neither very large nor very crowded. Unlike the British, who dote upon eccentrics, we in this country tend to regard them with suspicion. American eccentrics, to make their way successfully, must be exceptionally intelligent, energetic, and disciplined; and Johnson, according to a biography entitled "Philip Johnson: Life and Work," by Franz Schulze (Knopf; $30), has manifested these qualities almost from the cradle.

The hallmark of the eccentric is to be out of step with his contemporaries and to be convinced that they are out of step with him. Sometimes, instead of marching alone he will find himself at the head of a line of ardent followers, and with Johnson this has often been the case. His antagonists would no doubt argue that he has always aimed straight for the center and has had an incomparable knack for arriving there a moment or two ahead of anyone else. I believe that the situation is otherwise. Again and again, the courses he has chosen have been, at the time of his choosing them, lonely and unpopular ones, whether in the realm of sex or politics or architecture. In these matters, beginnings tend to be forgotten; it is the biographer's task to remind us of them. Schulze does so in terms sympathetic but unexpectedly blunt—and so, by my perhaps archaic standards, shocking. Schulze's portrait is unquestionably that of my old friend, but life has been much harder for him than I had supposed. How much he has suffered, and, on occasion, deserved to suffer!

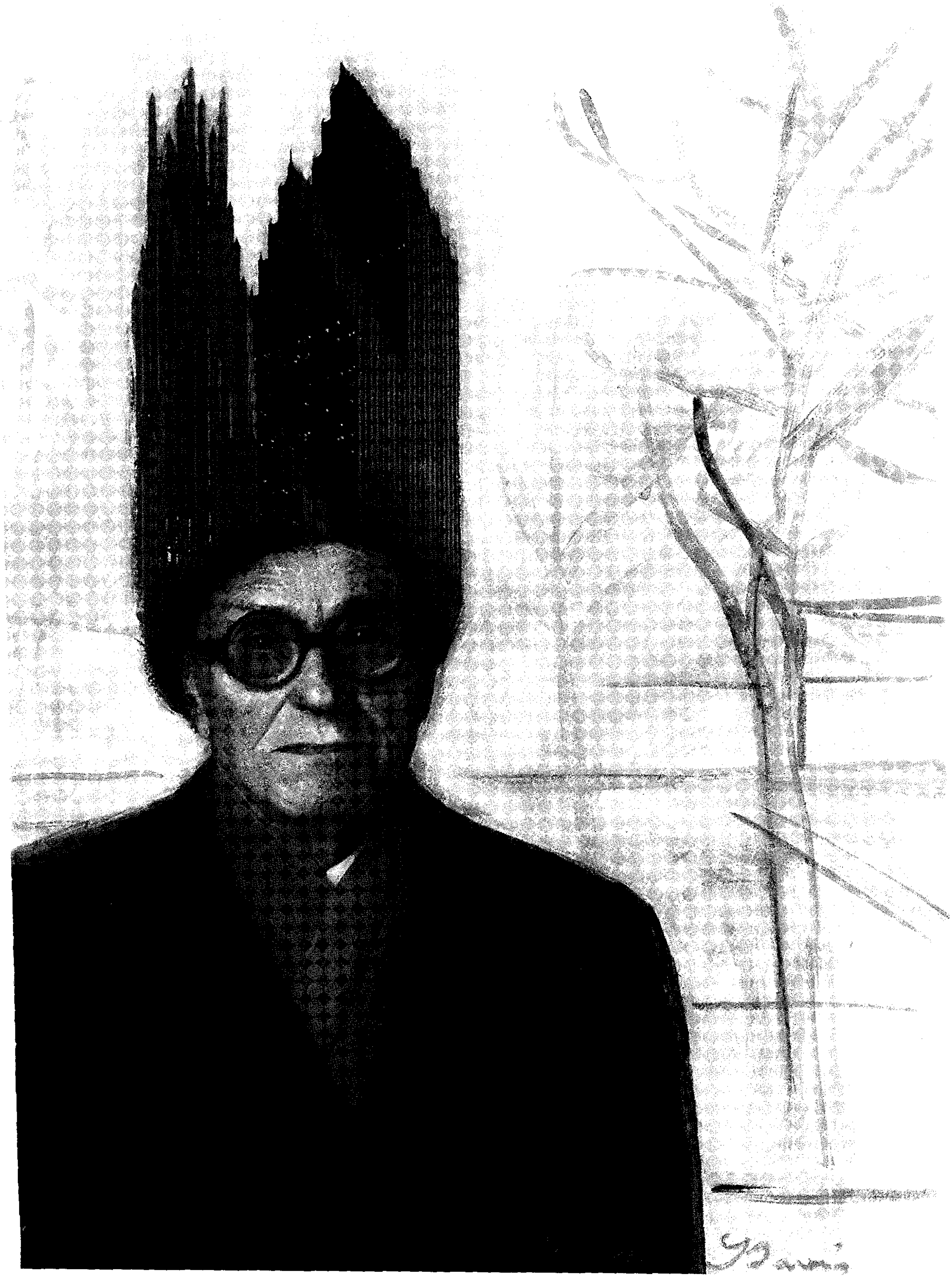
Johnson shares with Walt Whitman, another superb American eccentric, an attraction to tying what Whitman called "the old knot of contrariety," which has often led him to champion something simply because other people are unwilling to do so. When challenged, he is content to echo Whitman's "Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself." He has been known to treat friends like enemies and enemies like friends and to affect not to notice the difference—indeed, to act astonished when the difference is pointed out to him. If he is nearly always forgiven, it may be because we tend not to take seriously remarks that are made by someone who displays excellent manners and whose smiling countenance implies that he is jesting, not jousting. Having insulted me professionally a year or so ago by saying in an interview that I knew nothing about architecture and never would, at our next encounter he expected to receive from me—and did receive, for one learns after fifty years the folly of rebuking Johnson—the usual affectionate greeting. Colleagues whom he cherishes, like Robert A. M. Stern and Peter Eisenman, he has derogated in print with a single scatological epithet, and in Johnson's view why should he not? For it is all—so he protests—banter, all in fun. Only to his victims is it ruefully clear that it is *his* banter, *his* fun.

Perhaps because architects are members of a dog-eat-dog profession, in which there is nearly always either too much work to be done or too little, they are accustomed to attacking each other with infantile relish. Frank Lloyd Wright furnishes a classic example: he had a master's touch when it came to upsetting friends and charming clients. Wright and Johnson are often called the most eloquent architects of our century; their suave blarney has prompted many a hard-bitten businessman who commissioned a building from one of them to forgive the cost overruns that would ordinarily have rendered him apoplectic. But Wright and Johnson were also well matched in tartness. Johnson was the source of the widely circulated witticism to the effect that Wright was the greatest American architect of the nineteenth century, and Wright took revenge with a venom that he would discharge in his exquisitely modulated voice. (Once, when he ran into Johnson at a Yale seminar, he exclaimed, "Why, little Philip! I thought that you were dead!") Like Wright, Johnson has chosen to wear throughout his life the mask of an invin-



Philip Johnson: Few biographie

PAUL DAVIS



ving person have been so candid in their revelations, especially in revelations that can have come only from the subject.

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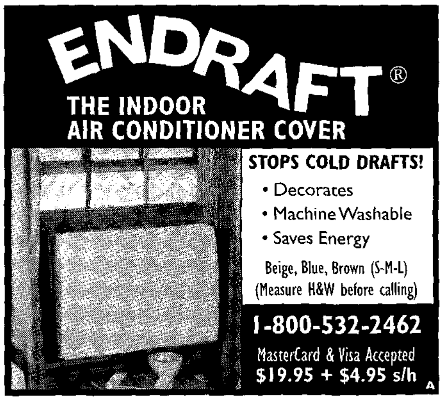
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cible, buoyant cheekiness—by which means he has simultaneously wooed the world and kept it at a fastidious distance.

SCHULZE, the biographer of Johnson's early hero Mies van der Rohe, undertook to write "Philip Johnson" with the understanding that it was to be published after Johnson's death. When it became known a year or so ago that it would be published during Johnson's lifetime, I assumed that this was because Johnson felt a desire to observe the amount of noise the book would arouse in the press and among his colleagues. It appears, however, that the change in publishing schedule came at Schulze's request, and that Johnson agreed to it. This must have required considerable courage; few biographies of a living person have ever been so candid in their revelations—especially in revelations that can have come only from the subject himself and that he must have known would provide his enemies with delectable morsels of scandal and provide him, his lovers, and other members of his immediate circle with a measurable amount of pain.

Johnson denies that the candor with which he answered Schulze's inquiries had anything to do with when the book was to be published. If on his first reading of it he felt a certain degree of anger—and he has told me that he did—this was not, I suspect, in response to the book's frankness but in response to its appraisal of his stature as an architect. Schulze acknowledges Johnson's powerful influence upon the architectural history of his time but denies him a place among its most gifted practitioners. Schulze passes judgments on Johnson's work that are harsh—yet no harsher than those of many other architectural critics, myself included. Johnson and a succession of partners working in his shadow have labored, not in vain, to satisfy rich clients, whose purpose in many cases hasn't been to enhance the urban scene but to strike favorable corporate poses and to make as much money as possible in doing so.

Some Johnson buildings earn almost universal praise: the Glass House that he built for himself, in New Canaan; the Blanchette Rockefeller Guest House, on East Fifty-second Street; the Dumbarton Oaks Museum, in Washington, D.C.; the Roofless Church, in New Harmony, Indiana; the Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Garden. Other Johnson projects earn almost universal condemnation: the California Building, in San Francisco, with its mansard roof serving as a backdrop to three colossal draped statues; the RepublicBank Center, in Houston, with stepped Dutch gables crowned by tiny pinnacles; and the so-called Lipstick Building, on Fifty-third Street and Third Avenue, which, though composed of costly materials, has a look of garish cheapness that, along with its elliptical shape, instantly won it its sorry nickname. Of unbuilt Johnson designs, the most generally disliked are the skyscrapers that were commissioned some ten years ago, when he was still associated with the architect John Burgee. They were intended to promote the redevelopment of Times Square as a center of amusement by the bizarre device of turning it into offices for corporate drones. In the latest of several versions, the skyscrapers were messily deconstructionist in style; mercifully, they remain in limbo, and Times Square goes on striving to remain Times Square.

FROM the opening, in 1932, of the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art for which Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Johnson coined the term the International Style, Johnson has been the figure around whom generations of American architects, architectural historians, and architectural critics have gathered, arguing with him and with one another over the theory and practice of an art that is, and always has been, radically unstable. Whatever their opinion of Johnson's work, they have been obliged to act in relation to him, for he has also been a much admired teacher, critic, and historian. Oddly, one of the accusations against him is that he is himself unstable—not a hub about which volatile personalities revolve but a kind of kite, blown hither and thither by the wayward breezes of fashion. It is certainly the case that changes of style have accompanied changes in the partners with whom he has been associated over the years. Nevertheless, it is possible to entertain the view that Johnson, as an exceptionally well-read student of architecture, sees continuous changes in design as no less fundamental to his profession than the accumulation of differing precedents has been to the profession of law. The succession of unlike protégés whose careers Johnson has furthered—besides Stern and Eisenman, one thinks of Michael Graves, Frank Gehry, and Jacquelin Robertson—attests to his belief in such changes.

Johnson has defined the basis of archi-

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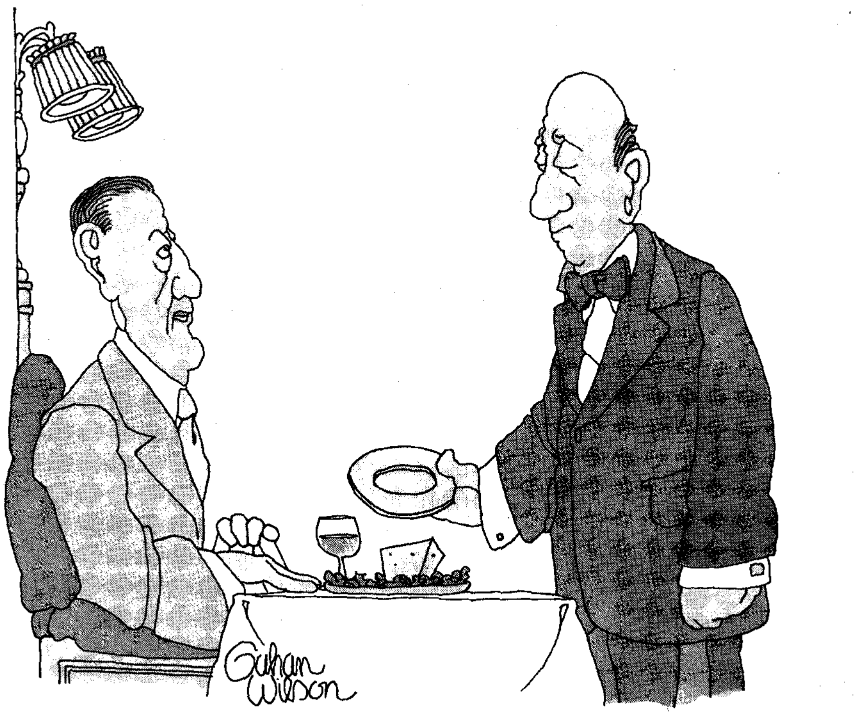
tecture as processional—as a movement through volumes of space. But surely he would argue that it is a movement through time as well. Though Schulze complains of Johnson's chronic mental fitfulness, he goes on to say of him that one of his favorite quotations is from Heraclitus: "Everything flows and nothing abides; everything gives way and nothing stays fixed." Schulze is hard on Johnson as he describes the professional consequences of that existential conflict: the stages by which the disciple of the Euclidean Mies becomes the champion of a froufrou postmodernism, the austere Seagram Building giving way to the baroque A.T. & T. Building. On the personal consequences of that conflict and the way it has shaped Johnson's life Schulze is far less judgmental.

And what a life it has been—at first glance enviable, but at every succeeding glance scarcely to be envied at all. Johnson was born, in 1906, with what are commonly called "the advantages": his family was socially prominent in Cleveland; he was adored by his parents, Homer and Louise Johnson, a prosperous lawyer and a culturally avid housewife; he was notably quick to learn; and he grew up handsome and graceful of movement (to this day, he enters a room with the tense alertness of a mountain lion approaching others of his species). Accompanying these advantages were disadvantages at least equal in number, and all the more difficult to deal with because, according to the conventions of the time, they were best kept hidden. One of them was his homosexuality, which, according to Schulze, revealed itself early. Philip's older brother, Alfred, had died of mastoiditis at the age of five, placing predictable burdens upon Philip, then two years old, and his two sisters, Jeannette, six, and Theodate, just a year old:

> For Theodate, this meant chiefly an overload of fatherly affection that turned her into a pampered darling even as it deepened the self-sufficient Jeannette's impatience with her. With Philip, the effect was more complicated, since he was recognized by both parents as the only surviving son and preserver of the name. . . . The attention paid his rearing was singular and intense, yet not without intimations of parental anxiety. Early in his childhood, his physical mannerisms were noticeably light and dainty, rather like a girl's. Homer never made his peace with such confounding behavior in his sole male heir, and while there is no way of knowing whether he purposely declined to lavish the voluntary little endearments on the boy that he could more easily afford with Theodate, it is certain that he was neither warm nor hearty with Philip. Gestures of closeness and closeness itself were left to Louise, who had her own ways of showing, or of withholding, them.

Young Philip attended a kindergarten ordinarily limited to girls and then a private school for boys, which emphasized sports and manual training, but he continuously failed at both. He and Theodate were then transferred to a public school so distant that they had to be driven there by the family chauffeur. (He dropped them



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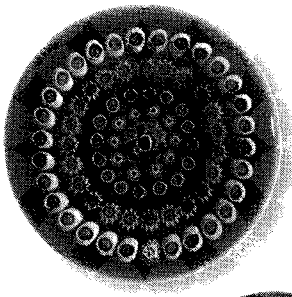

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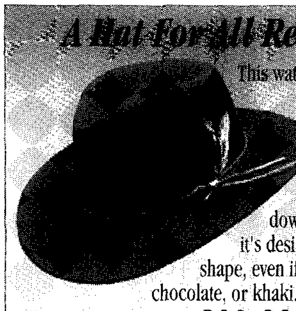

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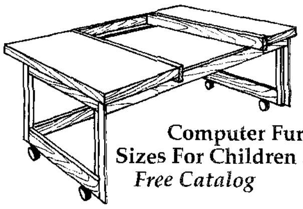

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off several blocks from the school, to let them give the impression that they had walked all the way.) Philip, dressed in Brooks Brothers suits, was an alien creature—a sissy who stuttered and was all the more likely to be sneered at because he received higher grades than his fellow-students. In North Carolina, where the Johnsons spent their winters, Philip attended another boys' school. He confided to Theodate that he felt a certain thrill in his encounters with his male classmates. "What do you think it means?" he asked her, and Theodate could reply only, "Philip, how should I know?"

At Hackley, a fashionable prep school in Tarrytown, Philip contrived to replace his stutter with a speed of utterance and a richness of vocabulary that awed his rivals in school debates and has awed many an audience since—especially when he has found himself successfully defending a design (for example, N.Y.U.'s Bobst Library, on Washington Square) that an entire neighborhood has voiced objections to. Though still friendless, he emerged as a leader in school activities and upon graduation was voted "brightest" and "most likely to succeed." It was expected that he would do well at Harvard; instead, he began to manifest symptoms of the manic-depressive cycles that have afflicted him ever since, and which in the twenties were as little to be openly discussed as homosexuality. Such palliatives as lithium and Prozac were not yet available; the more adventurous sufferers experimented with psychoanalysis. Philip consulted a doctor in Boston, who assured him that his depression and his as yet unconsummated homosexual longings were common among gifted people and that he wasn't to worry. Philip's father felt differently. "Boys don't fall in love with boys," he said. "Do something to get your mind off it."

In financial terms, Philip was in a position to do whatever he liked. Homer Johnson, distributing a portion of his wealth to his three children, presented Philip with a block of Aluminum Company of America stock, which rose so rapidly in value as to make him a millionaire by the time he left Harvard. As an undergraduate, he treated himself to expensive cars, books, and living quarters, and he began to practice a generosity to friends and philanthropic causes that has remained a constant throughout his life. He appears to have suffered two or more "nervous breakdowns" during his college days,

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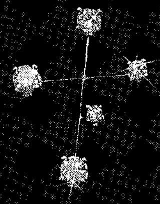

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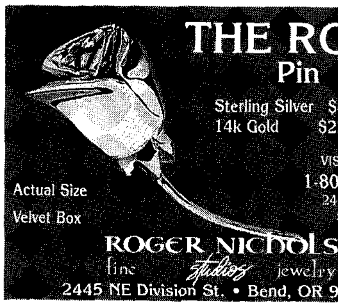

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What was to become of him, stuffed with learning but showing no particular bent toward one profession or another? He had majored in philosophy and flirted with the notion of a career as a teacher of it, but Alfred North Whitehead, who was at Harvard then and had befriended Philip, expressed the opinion that he lacked the rigor of mind to attain a true mastery of metaphysics. Philip agreed. He began to turn his attention to the visual arts, including the study of architecture.

Like any conscientious tourist, Johnson had visited and admired the usual Baedeker-bestarred sites—Chartres, the Parthenon, the Pyramids. Closer to home, he had poked fun at the designs of the only architect in his family—his mother's cousin Theodate Pope Riddle, who deserves a place of her own in any roster of eccentrics. Although Mrs. Riddle had done some good work—she designed the admirable main building of the Westover School and rebuilt the New York City brownstone in which Theodore Roosevelt was born—in the late twenties she was engaged in constructing a complex of buildings for a boys' school she had decided to found, which she called Avon Old Farms. The buildings were vaguely Cotswold-like in style and were artificially aged, and Philip was not alone in mocking them. The first living architect in whose work he took a scholarly interest was the Dutchman J. J. P. Oud. Johnson read about Oud's functional, no-nonsense buildings in a magazine article written by Hitchcock, who had attended Harvard a few years ahead of him and was soon to become one of his closest friends.

Even more important than Hitchcock in giving direction to Johnson's future was Alfred Barr, a gentle, studious lecturer at Wellesley College who, at twenty-seven, was already regarded as a leading American authority on contemporary art. Schulze writes of their first meeting, in the spring of 1929, that Barr and Johnson became involved "in a matter of minutes in a conversation of unrelieved intensity. Philip made up for his ignorance of the specifics of painting, sculpture, and architecture with his wide-ranging conversance with the humanities and his newly formed fascination with modern building in Europe." In old age, Johnson recalled that he had been at his best with Barr that day; to Schulze this means that he manifested "his mother's intellectual concentration, his father's sociability and extroversion, and the nervous vitality that was his own." Schulze proceeds to speculate on the two men's subsequent relationship:

> Philip's personal history, together with the fact that Barr was a bachelor at the time they met, are enough to arouse the suspicion that a sexual magnetism was also at work between them. There is no known evidence that it ever existed, either overtly or covertly. In fact, Philip, who in his mature years discussed his various liaisons with disarming and often sardonic frankness, spoke of Barr as he spoke of no one else, with a memorably guileless affection. He claimed he was never moved to touch Barr, who, relevantly or no, less than a year after their meeting married a woman to whom he appears to have been true his entire life and who in her own right became one of Philip's closest friends and companions.

Shortly after this momentous collision of minds, Barr was appointed director of the newly organized Museum of Modern Art, in New York. He suggested that he would find room for Philip on its staff, and Philip wrote to his mother, "I would rather be connected with that Museum and especially with Barr than anything I could think of." Ever since, Johnson's life has been entwined with that of the museum. From the start, it provided him with a familylike structure within which to concentrate his energies—perhaps a substitute for the family that, as a homosexual, he might choose never to sire. The museum has served, at worst, as (in Robert Frost's words) "the place where when you have to go there / They have to take you in" and, at best (again in Frost's words), as "something you somehow haven't to deserve." It carried Johnson over the recurring dark patches of his life and, when his spirits rose, offered him an ideal stage upon which to perform his feats of intellectual sleight of hand. The museum was at once a womb and a cockpit, where pride, shame, envy, affection, and ambition were mingled, and in which bitter quarrels were followed by reconciliations tearful and smiling. It was Johnson who founded the Department of Architecture at the museum, in 1930, and he has had a hand, open or concealed, in the choice of all his successors.

WE observe young Johnson arriving at the Museum of Modern Art on page 43 of the biography, and six decades of a tumultuous roller coaster of a life remain to be narrated by the sedulous, unflinching Schulze. But "roller coaster" is perhaps too straightforward a metaphor for the fits and starts of a person who was to lose himself many times in self-destructive misadventures. Some of these were political: in the course of what Schulze calls "the inglorious detour," from 1934 to 1946, Johnson demonstrated an indiscriminate admiration for rabble-rousing totalitarians, whether Americans like Huey Long and Father Coughlin or Europeans like Mussolini, Franco, and Hitler. Johnson was a champion of German culture, not least because of the freedom he had as a homosexual in the anything-goes atmosphere of Berlin during the thirties. He apparently had no difficulty accepting Hitler's views on race and religion. The company Johnson kept and the political views he held, which he wrote about in right-wing publications, led the F.B.I. to open a dossier on him. As the Second World War approached, he was suspected of being a Nazi spy, and not merely a rich young Wasp preaching the repellent bigotries so often found in his kind. Learned and combative, he thrashed about in the midst of other right-wing cranks, cut off from Barr, Hitchcock, and the world of contemporary art in which he had flourished. He retreated to Harvard, where he enrolled in the Graduate School of Design, and got his degree in 1943, several months after being drafted into the Army. He was almost thirty-seven, and in more than a year of Army service he never advanced past buck private. He was occupied with kitchen and latrine duty and was addressed with friendly disdain as Pop.

Johnson's political misadventures came to little, but they remain inexcusable, and some critics fault him for being insufficiently apologetic. Among his Jewish contemporaries, he appears to have earned forgiveness. Lincoln Kirstein is one of his closest friends, as is Phyllis Lambert, who persuaded her father, Samuel Bronfman, to bestow the commission for the Seagram Building on Mies and Johnson. Another friend, Edward M. M. Warburg, helped to secure for him a large government commission in Israel.

Other misadventures have been sexual and have represented no danger to the republic, if often some danger to Johnson himself. He totted up for Schulze four official "Mrs. Johnsons" (that is, men with whom he lived for significant periods of time), but as a born predator he sought conquests by the score, in places high and low. I once asked a friend of Johnson's and Hitchcock's whether they had ever been lovers, and he said, "No, but they hunted together." Hitchcock was a great snob, proud of his connection with the Steinway family and other local nabobs, and he took care to keep his lowborn lovers out of sight. Johnson learned to be less snobbish than Hitchcock, but in his social life he, too, spent years as an "extra" man at dinner parties. Until well into the sixties, it was convenient for hostesses to pretend that homosexuals were unattached bachelors; they were certainly not to be invited in pairs. In Johnson's circle, the novelist Glenway Wescott and Monroe Wheeler, a member of the staff of the Museum of Modern Art, were an exception to the rule. Wescott and Wheeler were inseparable and, wearing wedding rings, were accepted as a married couple in the forties and fifties by even the most indurate of homophobes.

Though Schulze is a thorough and reliable writer, I hadn't foreseen being instructed in such relentless detail about the vehement, helter-skelter nature of Johnson's promiscuities. For decades, he led what amounted to a double—or triple, or quadruple—life, charged with melodrama: precipitate infatuations and infidelities, hysterical separations and reunions. The taint of the *National Enquirer* threatens to infect Schulze's pages; we find ourselves in an early same-sex version of Charles-and-Di-land, where the most ardent of Toms grows weary of peeping. It is a relief to turn from Johnson's sexual scramblings to the habitual vexations of his relationship with the Museum of Modern Art.

If the museum acted as a kind of family to Johnson, then it had to be rebelled against—at times abandoned and at other times returned to, in the age-old tradition of the prodigal son. On occasion, this particular prodigal son has received an unwelcome setback. Having acted as the informal "house" architect for many years, in the late seventies Johnson was passed over in favor of an outsider, Cesar Pelli, when the museum undertook a major bout of remodelling and expansion. Moreover, the plans required the usurpation of part of Johnson's museum garden, one of the most satisfying of his designs. Still, where else is a prodigal to go but home? Today, Johnson and the companion of his old

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age, David Whitney, occupy an apartment in the Museum Tower, looking down upon his handiwork.

SCHULZE ends his biography with a glimpse of Johnson at eighty-eight, anticipating with zest the celebration of his ninetieth birthday, on July 8, 1996. The festivities will probably take place at the Glass House, where parties were held for his seventieth and eightieth birthdays. (The eightieth-birthday party proceeded according to plan despite the fact that Johnson missed it; he was undergoing an angioplasty, from which it took him several years to recover.) Johnson has already given the Glass House and its attendant buildings—among them a guesthouse, a sculpture gallery, and a subterranean art gallery—to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, but the Trust may have to be patient about taking possession of them. For, as Schulze points out, longevity is a Johnson family habit: Philip's mother lived to the age of eighty-eight, his father to ninety-seven, and his sister Jeannette is in her ninety-third year. Perhaps Schulze assumes that Johnson is only half joking when he claims that he will retire upon reaching a hundred and will move to Rome. And *I* am only half joking when I propose that this descendant of generations of Midwestern Protestants deserves to be offered a cardinal's hat on that important anniversary. The last of the innumerable zigs and zags of his lifetime might well find him standing on the steps of St. Peter's, urging that a few overdue improvements be made to its notoriously ill-proportioned façade.

But I suppose I am playing into Johnson's hands when I picture him as a debonair figure in a novel that Ronald Firbank might have written. There is far more to Johnson than his prankish showing off and his defensive self-mockeries. A favorite strategy in his late years has been to utter a single, repeated apology for some of the slick, money-making work that he and a succession of partners have undertaken in cities throughout the world. "You know I'm a whore," Johnson will say, his eyes merry behind his black-rimmed, homage-to-Corbusier spectacles, and to this glib confession there is only the obvious, unsatisfactory rejoinder: "That may *account* for you, Philip, but it doesn't excuse you." He isn't a whore, and neither friends nor colleagues ought to permit him to outwit either their disgust or their

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pity by consenting to this vulgar caricature.

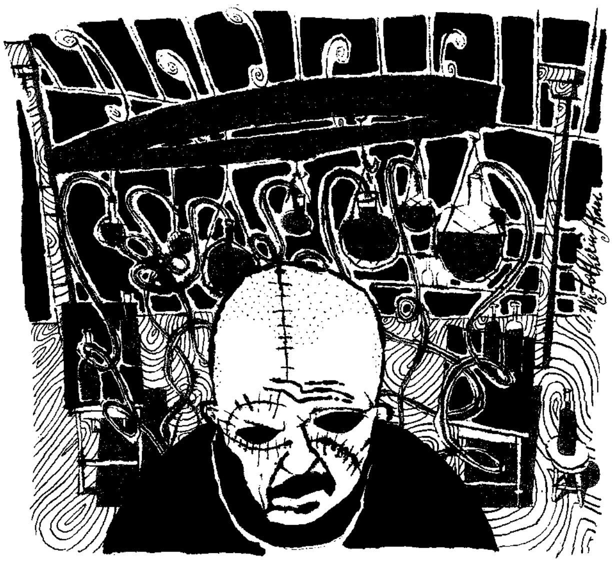
If I suggested that we see Johnson as an eccentric, it was partly because, given Johnson's penchant for alienating friends and creating enemies, I felt it would be prudent to install him in a kind of safe house until the person behind the mask of a Peck's bad boy could step forth and be appraised. I may have exaggerated the scale of the problem. Johnson is an oddity, but he isn't really in need of protective shelter. He is a grander figure than the words "need" and "protective" imply, and a far more formidable one. For me he has become the embodiment of a heroic victory over advantages and disadvantages alike. Against high odds and at whatever cost in private anguish, he has wrested a good time from the world—no mean prize. He has also succeeded in passing the only test that matters: he has given back to the world more than he has taken out of it. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

USED PARTS

BY ANTHONY LANE

Despite its proprietorial title, "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" has surprisingly little to do with Mary Shelley. The movie stars Kenneth Branagh, who also directed and co-produced it, so he might as well have gone all the way and named it "Kenneth Branagh's Frankenstein." On the other hand, the film is so full of wounded feelings and buried desires that it could easily be called "Oprah Winfrey's Frankenstein." You can imagine the creature sitting there on Oprah's show, with a tag line at the foot of the screen ("Was made from dead people"), and explaining to the audience that he just wants to be recognized for who he truly is. The Frankenstein story has always been the most sentimental of the great horror myths, a cautionary tale pretending to be a shocker. It wags a finger at human presumption—unlike the legend of the vampire, for example, which feels its way along our veins and strokes our paranoia. The challenge for Branagh is to dig away at Mary Shelley's fable and unearth some real fright; before the action starts, we get a voice-over and a written introduction crawling up the screen. Together, these promise a tale to "curdle the blood," to "strike terror into the hearts" of all who behold it. Already there is the faint squeak of desperation; we have hardly taken our seats before Branagh is reassuring us—and perhaps himself—that we will soon be dragged to the edge of them. Some hope.



Frankenstein per Kenneth Branagh: Not bad, just misunderstood.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

The film begins in the "Arctic Sea," in the year 1794, aboard the ship of a hardy explorer (Aidan Quinn); we can tell it's the end of the eighteenth century because, on hearing a howl of anguish drifting in from the icy, unpopulated wastes, the explorer says, "What the hell was that?" This is melodrama like Mother used to make—camp and cheery, fragrant with anachronism—and it continues as Kenneth Branagh rolls

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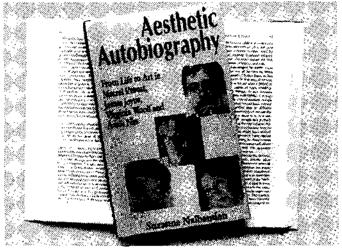

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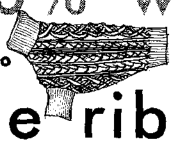

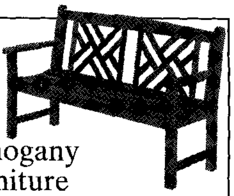

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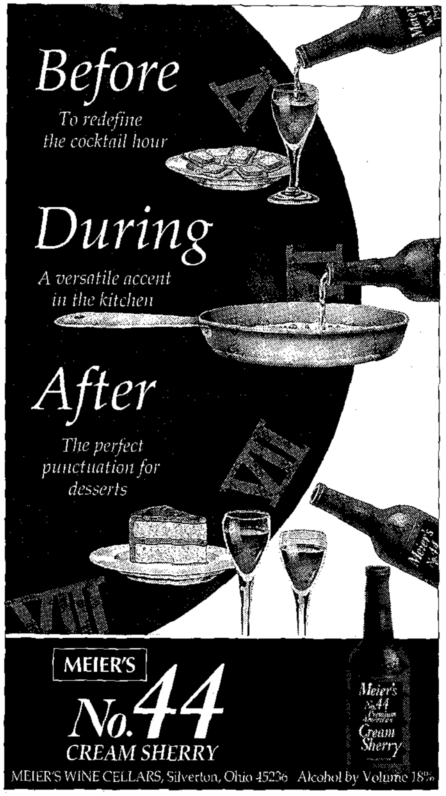
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up with frost on his beard and something on his mind. "My name," he says, pausing for a while, "is Victor . . ." Another pause, long enough for the audience to go and get mustard for their hot dogs. "Frankenstein." The movie then settles into flashback, with Victor taking us through the sorry progress of his obsession. As a child in Switzerland, he was reared in luxury (to be specific, in a set apparently left over from "Edward Scissorhands") and grew into an eager student. Watching him stride happily across a green Alpine hill, you half expect him to bump into Julie Andrews coming up the other side. The Von Trapp family was practically dysfunctional compared with the Frankensteins, who are so close as to be verging on the incestuous; Victor appears to be the same age as his adored mother (Cherie Lunghi) and, for good measure, he also falls in love with Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter), an orphaned kid who was raised as his sister. When the mother dies, Victor determines to conquer death once and for all. "I will stop this," he declares, standing on top of a mountain.

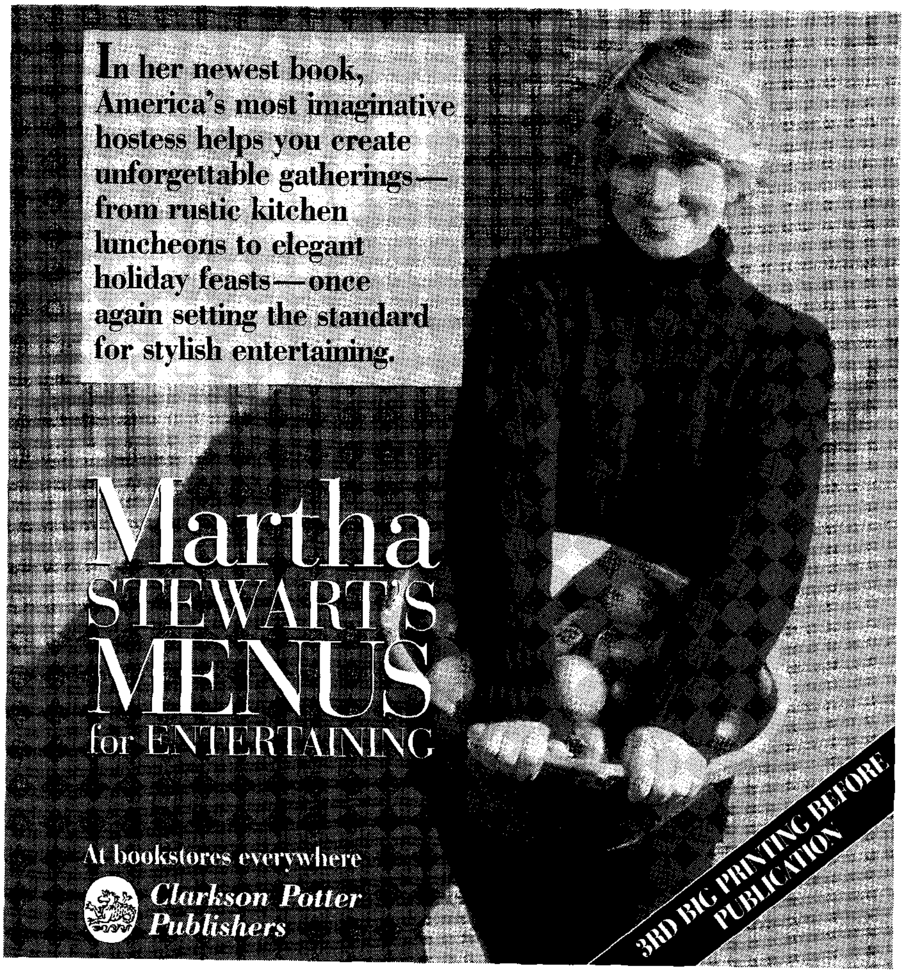
That kind of secondhand sublimity props up the entire picture. At one point, an aerial camera spies a dark loner pacing across a snowscape, slowly homes in, and arrives in time for a one-word speech: "Geneva." It's as if Branagh, intent on a study of romantic solitude, had modelled his movie on Caspar David Friedrich but missed the sense of calm. "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" manages to be both hysterical and tedious—an impossible combination, you might think, but Branagh pulls it off. He wields the camera like a nine-year-old brandishing a Christmas present; Victor may yearn to reanimate his mother, but that's nothing—Branagh the director treats every human figure as if it were already dead and could somehow be goaded back to life with one whip of his tracking shot. When Victor goes to study at the university town of Ingolstadt, the first lecture seems more like a photography demonstration than like a science course; the poor lecturer is shot from below his feet and above his head, in bulging wide-angle and leering closeup—in every conceivable way except for the steadiness of natural observation, the way in which we look at each other every day. I've seen pornography more dignified than this.

In Ingolstadt, Victor makes one new friend (Tom Hulce) and decides to build himself another. There's a pleasantly yucky sequence in which he goes looking for body parts: the leg of one corpse, the rest of another, and the brain of his former teacher, Dr. Waldman (John Cleese). It's a great idea: of all the loony brains in all the skulls in all the world, you wake up with Basil Fawlty's. (Cleese, in fact, gives one of the few compact performances in the film, matched only by the wonderful Ian Holm as Victor's father; either would have made a better and more unnerving Frankenstein than Branagh himself.) But the movie is too full of itself for high jinks; crammed with solemn ruminations—"We are on the verge of unheard-of discoveries"—and knowing winks at the medical ethics of the modern age, it finds no time to have fun. Everybody rushes round in a flap, driven onward by Patrick Doyle's maddening score, which treats the most casual conversation as if it were the climax of "Parsifal." I sat there blocking my ears and trying to remember James Whale's "Frankenstein," where tranquil creepiness is the order of the day, and Victor Erice's "The Spirit of the Beehive," a heartstopping meditation on the Frankenstein legend in which a little girl, entranced by the monster, gently bids welcome to her worst fears.

In "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" we never encounter the word "monster." Branagh thinks of Frankenstein's creation primarily as an unfortunate, and allows him to acquire speaking and reading skills in record time, so as to articulate his grievances to the world. "Did you ever consider the consequences of your actions?" the creature asks his maker, like a cop berating a driver with too many beers inside him. When I first heard that Robert De Niro was to play the creature, I thought, Terrific—La Motta with extra scars! The fight went out of De Niro some time ago, however, and it sure hasn't come back for this movie. You can't fault his dedication, but these days it leads him straight to ham. His makeup looks like a railroad map, with lines of stitches branching all over his face: it's vaguely horrible, yet not exactly frightening, and it reaches all too easily for compassion—he looks badly battered instead of wrongly made. Add the harelipped manner of his speech, the rough rags, and the foot-dragging gait, and the appeal for sympathy becomes embarrassing. Boris Karloff's appearance, in the Whale picture, was more thoroughly stylized; the boxy, anvil-topped head has been parodied for decades, but that has only toughened its resilience as an icon. The audience was taken aback to see emotions force themselves outward onto the features of what was, to all appearances, at least half machine; Karloff's heavy eyelids and stiff, somnambulist march told of a creature still fighting to awaken into a full consciousness of being human. I would exchange all of "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" for the moment in the earlier version when Karloff (in blessed, unscored silence) stretches up his hands toward the sunlight—is he praying for mercy, or did the first, life-giving bolt of lightning not quite do the trick? It is this unfinished quality in Karloff that still freaks you out: you know that he could give up the struggle, and fall back on brutality, at a moment's notice. De Niro shows us the pathos under the menace, which is easy; Karloff shows another knot of danger, deep within the pathos. There is always more trouble to come.

If De Niro had been leashed in, who knows; the film might have turned round and grabbed us. But Branagh allows his actors the same breadth and license that he gives to the camera; he may be too nice a guy to be making movies. How else does one explain the presence of Helena Bonham Carter in this picture? Word has it that when Branagh was casting the role of Elizabeth he passed on Michelle Pfeiffer and Jodie Foster and held out for Helena. An interesting choice. She swoons convincingly in the bedroom, but her chirpy, snapping delivery is like an anti-gothic vaccine, dispelling any doomy atmosphere that Branagh tries to create; and however beautifully the film clothes her and piles up her hair she still looks a bit like Mickey Rooney. The fiery finale, when Branagh, De Niro, and Bonham Carter pull out the stops, is a laughable, uncontrolled folly; the movie's idea of high passion is as threadbare as its vision of pastoral peace, in which an old blind man perches in a glade and plays the recorder. The whole thing feels tired and ignorant, incapable of serving up anything fresh; there's not one scene that resonates—nothing to coax us away from the bare dramatic facts. "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" could do with a shot of lightning itself.

MOVIES set in the southeast corner of Romania in 1925 are pretty hard to come by, but on the evidence of



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Lucian Pintilie's "An Unforgettable Summer" they are worth seeking out. The brown landscape of Dobruja has a parched loveliness that will remind moviegoers of "Badlands" or "Bad Company," but the light falling across it feels harder and clearer than anything summoned by those sober films. The ethnic mix is a busy blend of Romanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Turks, and Macedonians. They all try to live together in peace and harmony, which is another way of saying that butchery is crouching in the wings, patiently awaiting its cue.

Into this fragile setup comes a loving couple. Petre Dumitriu (Claudiu Bleont), a captain in the Romanian Army, is accurately described as "that shrimp with a monocle." His wife, Marie-Thérèse Von Debretsy (Kristin Scott-Thomas), is the pearl with the bobbed hair; she outshines him in every way, but she loves him, and spurns all other advances. This stubbornness gets the two of them exiled, together with their children and their harpsichord, to an outpost in Dobruja. It is obviously the place to be exiled; Ovid himself was sent there by Augustus in A.D. 8, and complained of the barbaric populace and the bitter, soil-freezing winds. But he played up the wretchedness, inventing a perpetual winter to sharpen his furious laments; the Dumitriu family is met by dusty heat, and one of Marie-Thérèse's first acts is to take an open-air bath with her children, in full view of anyone who cares to watch.

This is a fresh departure for Kristin Scott-Thomas; those who have caught only her English-speaking movies think of the delicate nerves, the crackable-china looks, and the posh, precise hiss of her accent—remember how she stopped "Four Weddings and a Funeral" dead in its tracks with a quick confession of love to Hugh Grant. But her work in French is more downbeat, and now her first Romanian film—she learned enough of the language to deliver her lines—uncovers a strip of steel running through the glamour. Marie-Thérèse isn't just willful; she actually dares to be difficult, to cut against the grain of her good manners, defending a gang of innocent peasants whom the Army would like to shoot on suspicion of murder. Everything goes wrong, and she loses her husband his job; but the fight was worth the trouble, as it was for the heroine of Pintilie's last film, "The Oak." A lost cause is still a cause; it has proved itself in battle.

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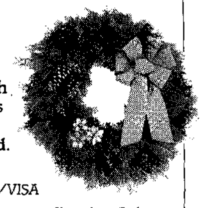

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A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS:

We are pleased to announce that most of the original artwork published in *The New Yorker's* Fashion Issue, November 7, 1994, is available for sale. *The New Yorker* will forward all proceeds to the Gay Men's Health Crisis. G.M.H.C. is the oldest and largest AIDS service organization providing direct services for men, women, and children with H.I.V. and AIDS in New York City, and education and advocacy worldwide. If you are interested in purchasing any of the artwork, please call (212) 536-5684 for further details and a price list.

THE NEW YORKER

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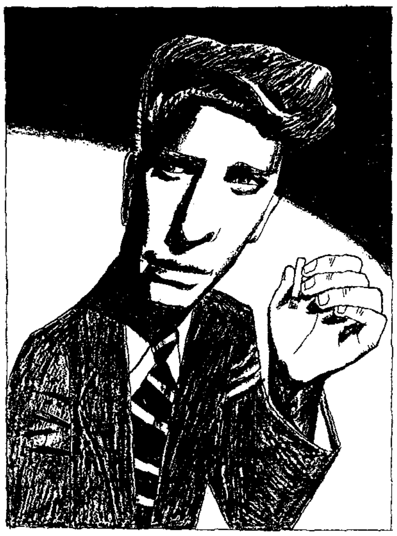
Pintilie approaches the movies in the same way that Marie-Thérèse takes on Dobruja, with an infuriating brilliance. He is one of the last left-field directors still at work; images wing in from nowhere and smack you in the eyes. "An Unforgettable Summer" is the antithesis of "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein"; one surprise comes tumbling after another, and yet there is not a moment of mere show. From the shuddering horseback shots of the opening credit sequence to the bored, bejewelled hosts of a ball; from the deep-green shadows in which Dumitriu's troops are ambushed to the cartload of lipless corpses which trundles back to base; from the endless limp salads of family suppers to the friendly, chewing horse that stands behind the captain as he puts the barrel of a gun in his own mouth: time and again, Pintilie picks out these odd and reviving details in the texture of what seemed a flat and unprofitable life. He would get on with Ovid just fine.



Burt Lancaster, 1913-1994.

MARK ULRIKSEN

BURT LANCASTER is dead, but it's hard to believe. So what if the obituaries said that he died on October 20th? He had cheated death many times before, and was not a man to let old habits slip. In "The Flame and the Arrow" he was hanged by an evil count; one of his merry men, however, had taken the executioner's place, and together they faked the fatal moment. The body was borne away to a safe spot, opened its eyes, and said with a grin, "You know, I'm

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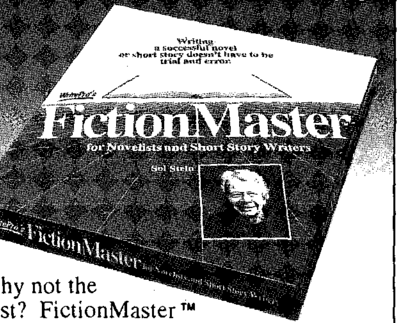
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hungry. . . . There must be an easier way of dying." There was a slow-burning vitality in Lancaster that refused to fade.

Burton Stephen Lancaster was born in East Harlem in 1913, and won a basketball scholarship to N.Y.U. The one fact that everyone recalls about him, because it makes such perfect sense, is that the young Burt trained in a circus—as an acrobat, of course, although it is equally tempting to picture him as a bareback rider, as a lion tamer, or even as a memory man, wowing the crowd with the size of his mind. What made him so intimidating onscreen was not just that he was bigger and broader than the other characters but that he knew more than they did and was prepared to use it. As the scout in "Ulzana's Raid," his blue eyes startling in that sun-baked face, he was the only person who understood the Apaches well enough to track them down; as the gossip columnist in "Sweet Smell of Success" he gazed through heavy spectacles at a world he despised so profoundly that his only option was to lay it bare; and as the benevolent tycoon of "Local Hero," set down by helicopter on the Scottish coast, he looked gratified (if unsurprised) that the elements had conspired in his favor. "Good sky you've got here, MacIntyre. Well done," he said to his subordinate. No wonder Lancaster put the fear of God in people; most of the time, he *was* like God—difficult, unfathomable, kindly without warning, rigid with justice, and well worth pleasing.

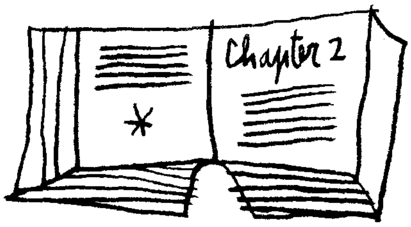
Anyone unlucky enough to have seen a dubbed Burt Lancaster movie will know that it was hardly worth watching. Like Cary Grant, another ex-acrobat, he had the simple, unbeatable gift of moving well across a movie screen; but, as with Grant, his true character only made sense—the performances only came together—when he began to talk. He gave audiences two film stars for the price of one: a Claude Rains voice inside a Robert Mitchum frame. His Mt. Rushmore jaw hung very slightly open, which meant that the basic Lancaster expression, both in wrath and in repose, was a near-smile; you could hear it in the dangerous, winning croon of his lines. In "Birdman of Alcatraz" he comes up against a sparrow as stubborn as he is: "All right, come on, you little punk. Fly," he says. Listening to this, you realize how thoroughly he paves the way for that other soft speaker, Clint Eastwood, and why the caution of both players makes it more, not less, probable that they will be driven to do harm.

It is not violence that is new in American cinema but violence in a vacuum; the death of Lancaster should remind us of a more mature, provocative age, when movies admitted that violence and decency could go hand in hand, that brute force leaked from the souls of ordinary men. Remember the quick, decisive smash of that bottle as he squares up to Ernest Borgnine in "From Here to Eternity," or the tragic elation of an old-timer's grin, in "Atlantic City," as he finally blows away a couple of crooks. Most actors would have played the Birdman for pity; Lancaster had the guts to show us someone who educated himself to the limit and never lost the look of a killer. "Don't waste your time grieving over me," he tells a guard. "When it's cut, it's cut." You look back on his career, and the duds melt away, leaving the great roles rock solid: prince and preacher, pirate and patriarch, the swimmer heading back to a home that no longer exists. (The one thing Lancaster feared was water, but he beat the fear down.) By repute, he was tricky to work with, but that merely confirms our trust in him: Burt Lancaster knew what he wanted, and he reckoned that we wanted it too. At the close of "Ulzana's Raid," mortally wounded, he sends the cavalry on its way. "Hell, Lieutenant, I'm gonna die anyway," he says. "Let me sit." The movie ends on a freeze-frame as he licks a cigarette paper and starts to roll a smoke. What other actor looked so content to be alone? ♦

THEREIN LIES A TALE DEPT.

[*From the Charleston* (*S.C.*) *Post & Courier*]

K. Ross Newland said he is "a poor boy" and has not received $500 yet. "My campaign is mostly real simple expenses and grass-roots stuff," he said. Candidate Paul Mitchell said his campaign has not yet heated up. Candidate John Peeples Jr. could not be reached for comment, because reportedly, he lives on an airplane without a phone, City Hall staff said.



BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Pinch Runner Memorandum

by Kenzaburo Oe; translated from the Japanese by Michiko N. Wilson and Michael K. Wilson
(M.E. Sharpe; $35 hardcover, $17.95 paper)

PUBLISHED in Japan in 1976, this experimental novel by the recent winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature could be described as an impassioned argument about nuclear power, jazzed up in a very Japanese way with pop-culture trimmings, primarily from thrillers and porn. What if a group of student radicals were to make an atomic bomb? And what if they turned out to be the unwitting tools of an Ian Fleming-style international villain? Could a brain-damaged eight-year-old boy and his thirty-eight-year-old father, a former nuclear physicist, avert the disasters—obvious and otherwise—implicit in that scenario? If the father gave the story to Kenzaburo Oe (who also has a brain-damaged son) to "ghostwrite"? If, after doing so, the father were to wake up one morning to find himself eighteen, and his son twenty-eight? Oe's writing is bold, savage, and often very funny. Despite insistent reminders of the destructive threat of nuclear power, this complicated book is above all a heartening display of the explosively constructive power of imagination.

GENERAL

The Tribe of Tiger: Cats and Their Culture

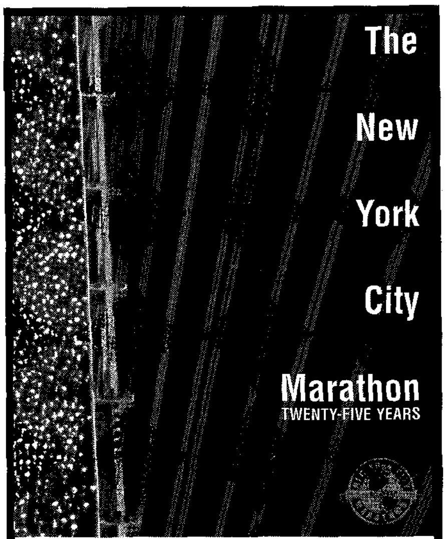
by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas
(Simon & Schuster; $20)

THE sensitive anthropologist and gifted writer lays out ways in which questions about feline behavior can be answered by reframing them in terms of the essential component of feline diet: meat. Thus an individual cat doesn't have a territory so much as a "ranch"—what it owns is future meat. A pet cat that brings you its wriggling prey may be trying to teach you its crucial skill, as if you, too, depended on this diet. Thomas sheds light on such matters as why we like cats so much (they have physical qualities of human babies), and is irked at how little study has been done of them. Her case for the existence of cat culture—learned behavior passed on—is demonstrated in a series of extraordinary anecdotes about lions and pets, African bush people, trainers, elephants, and the benighted whose arrogance or ignorance sometimes gets them killed. If this world-class observer's conclusion about dogs was that what they want is one another, a surprising offshoot of her culture thesis is that sometimes what cats learn to want is us. (A portion of this book first appeared in *The New Yorker*.)

Sarah Orne Jewett

by Paula Blanchard
(Addison-Wesley; $27.50)

THIS sympathetic and beautifully written biography claims neither too little nor too much for a writer who has been alternately cherished and patronized by literary fashion. Although New England and the United States changed radically during Jewett's lifetime (1849-1909), change came only gradually to her corner of Maine, and so her sense of a living past grew out of the reality around her: the house she inherited (now a museum) had been bought by her grandfather in the eighteen-twenties. And Jewett herself shared many of the characteristics she celebrated in her Maine people. Dauntlessness is one: her deplorable health (for most of her life she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis) neither stopped her writing nor soured her good nature. Blanchard shows plainly that although Jewett's best-known fiction sticks close to her native territory, she was no mere provincial: friendships, travel, and correspondence brought her into the wider world. Her women friends compose a gallery of artists, intellectuals, writers, and reformers decorously engaged in undermining barriers to female achievement, and the encouragement that Jewett gave Willa Cather was decisive for the younger writer's development. ◆



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BY FRANK CAMMUSO AND HART SEELY

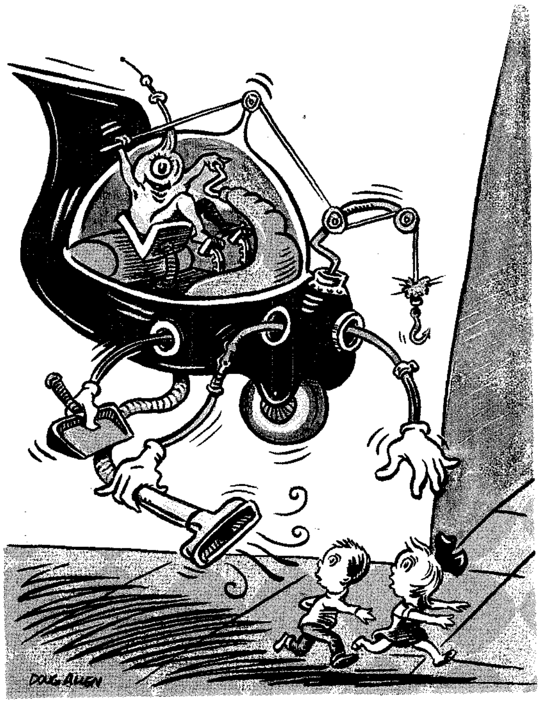
The estates of the writers Rod Serling and Theodor S. Geisel—alias Dr. Seuss—both recently announced the discovery of unpublished manuscripts. What they didn't announce, though, is this collaboration:

The power went out.
We had no phones or light.
So we sat in the dark
On that hot summer night.
I sat there with Sally,
When something went *roar*
Behind old McPhee's
Corner Five & Dime Store. . . .
The time is the present.
The town, it may vary.
The signpost ahead
Says the street is Mulberry.
Then a flash in the sky
Of a meteorite
Calls the residents out
To a zone of twilight.

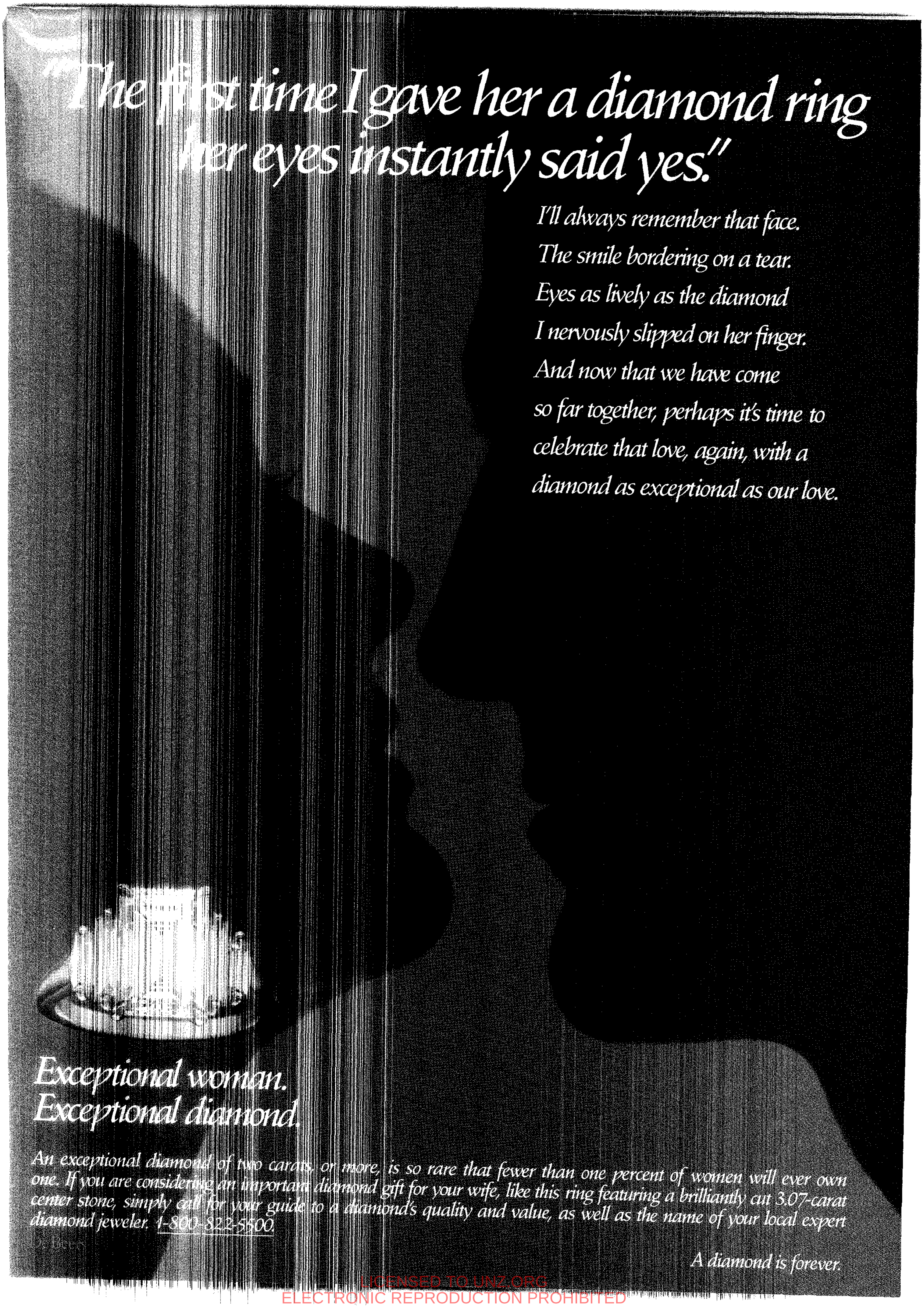
Then out from the alley
There came a sharp cry.
We looked and we saw him,
The Guy with the Tie.
It was striped, blue and green,
With a knot like a noose,
And appeared to be stained
With red Beezle-Nut juice.
"The Martians have landed!
They've killed fifty-three!"
Said the Guy with the Tie
To old Mr. McPhee.
"They razed Maple Street, sir.
They went door to door.
They've zapped everyone,
And intend to zap more!"
ZAP!
"By my estimate, sir,
It's now fifty-four.
So we must warn the people,"
He said, full of fear.
"We'll tell all Mulberry
The Martians are near."

But McPhee said, "No! No!
All this talk makes me bored.
All this ranting and raving—
It should be ignored.
Now, listen up, people,
It must be a ruse.
'Cause if Martians had landed
It'd be on the news.
That zap we all heard
Wasn't space-ray-gun fire.
Just the zap of the snap
Of a high-tension wire.
There's no Martians, I tell you.
No monsters, I say!
And, besides, Maple Street
Is two miles away."

"But you can't turn your backs!"
Said the Guy with a yelp.
"The folks up on Maple Street
Sent me for help.
They said you would come.
They said, 'Be persistent,
'Cause a person's a person
No matter how distant.'
I never thought you folks
Would be so resistant."
"*Go away!*" cried McPhee.
"This is for your own good.
You're really not welcome
In this neighborhood!
Everybody go home!"
Yelled McPhee with a sneer.
"Go home to your TVs,
Your couches, your beer!
To your cars, to your dogs,
To your burgers and fries,
'Cause this Beezle-Nut-eater
Is telling you lies!"
So the Guy shook his head
And he walked out of sight
And I wondered right then
If we'd done what was right.



Soon the crowd had dispersed,
'Cept for Sally and me,
And the man of the hour,
Old Mr. McPhee.
And he patted our heads,
And he let out a sigh.
Then he took off his glasses
And winked his third eye. . . .
Tonight's case in point,
For approval submitted,
Concerns simple earthlings
By Martians outwitted.
So this word to the wise:
If a stranger comes through,
And the TVs are off
And the telephones, too,
And he tells you of death
And destruction so near,
And his tie shows a bit
Of red Beezle-Nut smear,
Consider this thought—
It could happen right here! ♦



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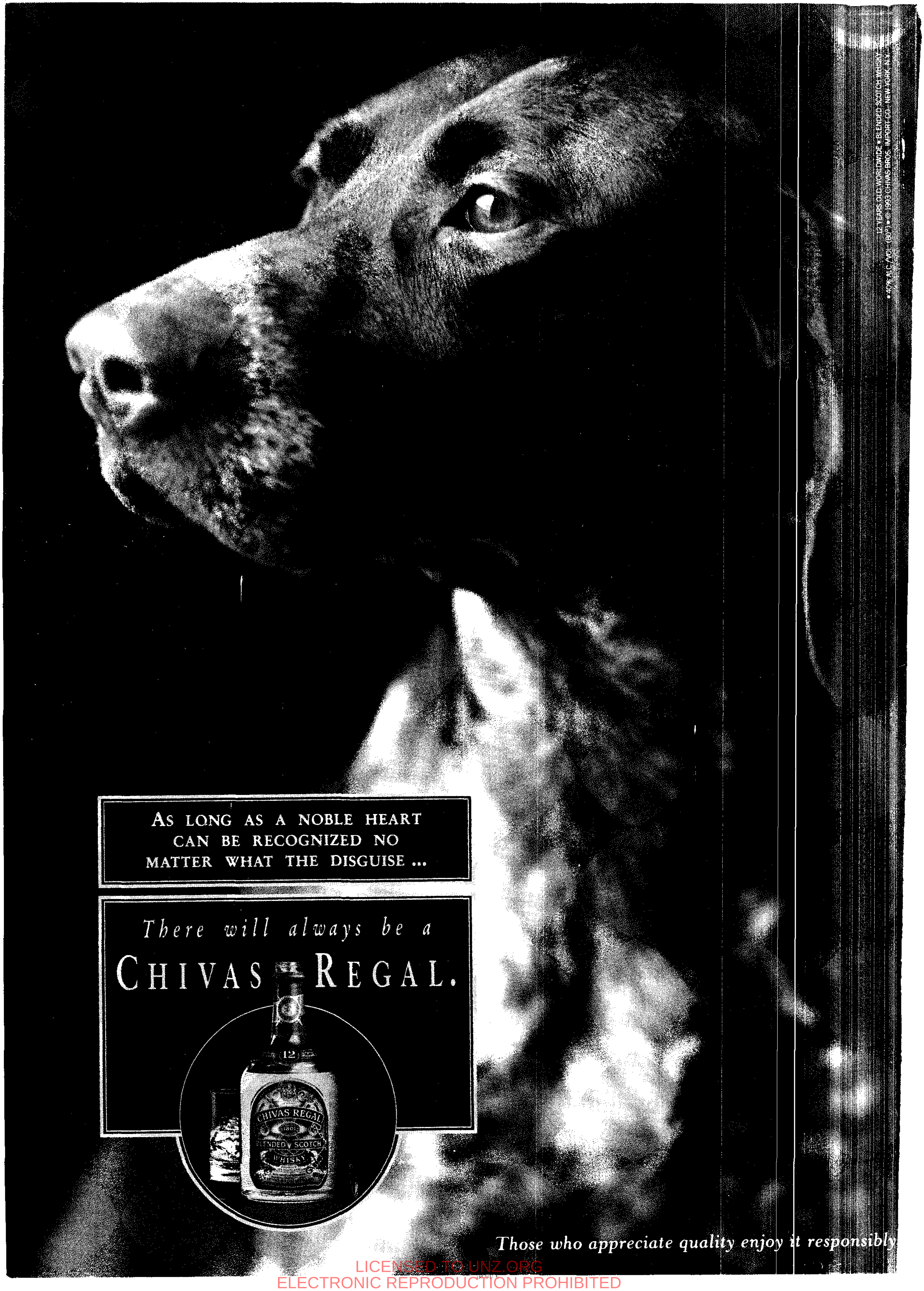
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